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D I A R Y

ILLUSTRATIVE OF

T H E T I M E S

OF

G E O R G E T H E F O U R T H,

INTERSPERSED WITH

ORIGINAL LETTERS

FROM THE LATE

QUEEN CAROLINE, THE PRINCESS CHARLOTTE,

AND FROM

VARIOUS OTHER DISTINGUISHED PERSONS.

EDITED BY JOHN GALT, ESQ.

Tôt ou tard, tout se scait.

MAINTENON.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

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D I A R Y

OF THE

TIMES OF GEORGE THE FOURTH.

March 3rd.

I HAD the pleasure of receiving a letter from Miss V——.

MY DEAR ——.

YOUR letters are welcome as flowers in May, and refreshing as the morning dew, but trust me their effects are not so transient ; though the soil that receives them is too sterile to yield any return save the poor tribute of gratitude. You seem so much interested with the translation of “ Pastor Fido ” that I shall take the liberty of sending it to you, that you may judge of its merits : not being skilled in the Italian tongue I cannot possibly give an opinion of it as a *translation*.

VOL. IV.

B

As anything else, I do not like it, nor ever liked pastorals or pastoral writing, even of the first order, further than as vehicles for fine poetry ; and then the poetry would have pleased me better had it spoken for itself, than from the mouth of a creature to me so unconceivable as a shepherd or shepherdess, whose chief, or rather *only*, characteristics are innocence and simplicity. I am sorry to say they are but too apt to be insipid and uninteresting to those who merely read about them ; as one sees many a face which, though pretty in life, would soon cease to please in a picture, while others possessed of far less beauty often form more interesting portraits. In short, they are creatures that never will have, nor ever had, an existence, and yet, unlike all other fictitious creatures, there is no fancy displayed in them ; they are, one and all of them, tender, love-sick, or frantic amorous animals, as ignorant as savages, and, at the same time, as refined as courtiers. It may be owing to some defect in my mind that I really never yet knew an interesting pastoral character, or cared a straw whether they hanged themselves upon the first willow, or drowned themselves in the neighbouring brook. I can enter into the delights of Homer's gods, and follow to their darkest recesses Milton's

devils, and delight in the absurdities and extravagancies of Shakspeare's men and women, but I never could sympathize in the sufferings of even Virgil's shepherd swains.

You say you wish yourself back again in the solitude of Dovenest; but I do not wish you there; since, in spite of all that has been advanced in favour of solitude, it seems to me a dangerous situation for an active mind and ardent imagination. Seclusion for a while is but a necessary indulgence, since it is beneath the soft wing of retirement that grief seeks to shelter itself from the rude gaze of the world. Amid the tumults of life it might be extinguished, but in retirement it is sure to be *stilled* into peace. However, there is a point at which stillness ends and stagnation succeeds, and what was a refreshing sleep sinks into a lethargic stupor. I do not presume to say this would ever have been *your* case; but it seems to me a danger that awaits more especially a refined taste and a wounded heart, when left too long to their own operations. What some one calls a "*fat mind*," may doze away its days without danger, either in the world or out of it; it runs no risk of having its notions too refined, or its ideas becoming too highly elevated. Mere bodily blessings are all it requires, and, provided such persons can

eat, drink, and have their being, they seek not the gifts of the spirit, or the intercourse of friendship. In short, I agree with (I forget who) that says, "To spend one's days in solitude one must be either above or below humanity." But this is a theme far beyond me, and I'm afraid you will think me very presumptuous in having so long molested you with the wanderings of my foolish fancy.

My pen, which is my only tongue, goes faster than my little slow-footed judgment. If I could bear to write a letter over again, I should be tempted to do so on the present occasion; but indolence often makes me reckless of reputation, and I must therefore throw myself and all my failings on your mercy.

You bid me tell you what I read; and, in obedience to your commands, I confess myself to be at present under a course of *historical physic*, which ought to have been administered to me in my youth, and for want of which I have grown up under many infirmities. 'Tis rather late indeed to be only laying the foundation, when the superstructure ought to have been completed; but, as I am not very aspiring, nor ever expect to raise mine very high, I shall be content if it only serves to shelter me from absolute ignorance.

I am therefore labouring hard amongst the ruins of antiquity, tho' even amidst their profound recesses I sometimes have a little of the dust of *modern rubbish* thrown into my eyes. The truth is, in a town it is very difficult to refrain from following the multitude in their pursuits of literature. One is so *baited* with new books that one is forced to take them up in self-defence; for who would dare to drag forth a huge musty volume of Roman antiquities, in preference to an elegant little epitome of modern biography? Do not laugh at me, pray, or suppose that, "sheathed in erudition," I'm "plunged to the hilt in venerable tomes;" for I am a very suckling in knowledge, and should certainly not have presumed to entertain you with a display of my ignorance, had you not desired it. When my day's task is at an end, I keep my nightly vigils with Young, whose *Night Thoughts* I do think, next to Milton's, the most sublime poem in the English language. I know 'tis accounted gloomy, and for those who love an eternal glare of sunshine it may be so; but for such as seek the shade 'tis only a refreshing repose. Have you read it of late years? I am reading on Sundays "*Morehead's Discourses on the Principle of Religious Belief*," which are greatly admired, though I cannot say I think

there is either much strength or novelty in them. It seems to me as if he had taken some of the most striking passages in Scripture, and *beat them out*, and worked them up, as a *cunning artificer* does a bit of pure gold.

But to return to "Pastor Fido," with whom I have not yet finished,—I must tell you, that though I (what a great authority!) do not take pleasure in this said translation of the "Pastor Fido" of Guarino, many of the wise folks here admire it beyond measure. Walter Scott and Wilson are of these, and therefore there must be something worthy to excite the commendations of such men as they are, though I cannot discover its beauties. I suppose it is for the reason I already mentioned, that to me there is nothing so insupportable as a pastoral life. The shepherds and shepherdesses are always simpletons and viragoes, and that rule is faithfully adhered to in this instance, with the addition of an *Arcadian* nymph in a *wig*!

But what do I see? two sheets of fine white paper blotted with my scrawl, and the matter not better than the penmanship. Will you ever forgive me for imposing such an endless epistle upon your patience? All I will add is, that I delight in your letters, and (strange confession

for such a bookworm as I have made myself appear!) I take especial pleasure in all the gossip and news of the gay world, more particularly when narrated by your graphic pen, which sets all the people's portraits before me. Your favourite C—— has taken up his abode here, but he will not condescend to mix much with the people of this town. He is quite out of his element in this northern city, where there is little to be seen of the sort of society he prefers. But I agree with you in thinking his genius unique; and, if I did not stand in such awe of him, should delight in his company; but he has a tongue sharper than a two-edged sword. Have you not discovered this?

Adieu, my dear ——,

I am ever yours, &c.,

I received a visit from Miss Knight. Her presence recalled Kensington and the poor Princess to my mind. She conversed with sense and kindness on these topics, but her exceeding prudence always restrains the expression of her feelings, and she appeared averse to dwelling on the subject. The only remark she made which

struck me as singular was, that, in speaking of the King's illness and probable decease, she said, she conceived it would be a fortunate event for the country. Miss Knight has a very refined mind, and takes delight in every subject connected with literature and the arts. She is exceedingly well read, and has an excellent judgment in these matters. Being lately arrived from Rome, Miss Knight spoke with enthusiasm of the interest attached to that classic city. She was intimate with Cardinal Gonsalvi, and has a high opinion of his character and talents. She said he was more free from vulgar prejudices on religious topics than any Roman Catholic with whom she had ever been acquainted, and that his benevolence and unaffected piety are admirable. When I alluded to the Duchess of D——'s influence over him, Miss Knight seemed to consider that it was an erroneous idea to suppose he was under her sway, or any other person's, for that he was particularly independent in all his opinions. She said the Pope was a most amiable man, but not so clever or decided a character as the Cardinal. I was much amused by her description of a visit paid by a lady to the Princess Pauline, who received her guest with all the form of a royal personage. Her conversation was chiefly about

the English people, and she observed that all the English gentlemen who had ever seen her were in love with her—said she never saw a person who appeared to her half so conceited or vain as this lady. In speaking of Canova's statue of herself, she said, "*Ça ne me flatte pas.*"

Lady W—— was at Rome at the time Miss Knight resided there, and she was giving tableaux and private theatricals, which, she said, were very well got up. I alluded once to the poor Princess Charlotte's death, but Miss Knight only replied, "Ah, that was a melancholy event!" and passed on to other subjects. She did not impress me with the idea of lamenting the Princess so much as I should have supposed she would have done. But perhaps she may, in reality, mourn her melancholy fate, and that she only forbears speaking of her lest she should say too much. Certainly Miss Knight was very ill used by the Queen and the Regent, and I do not think Princess Charlotte liked, although she esteemed her. Miss Knight was not sufficiently gay, or of a style of character suited to her Royal Highness.

Mr. L—l the painter visited me. He is a conversible, modest person, with just the sort of manners suited to his station, and all the varied lore which his profession supplies, to render him an

agreeable member of society. How refreshing it is, even in the busy vortex of the gay world, to find some persons who still soar above it, and who indulge, with high, unspoiled tastes, in all the elegancies of mental pursuit!

I called at Mrs. ——'s. She is just the same person that she ever was—a great contrast in character to my little artist friend; for she is busy perpetually with this world, and always on the look-out for the high places of the earth, longing to attain unto them, and courting those who have already gained them. Yet this pursuit after worldly influence and worldly aggrandizement does not appear to afford her happiness; for she is always grumbling, and speaking in a mysterious manner of her misery. She said to me, “I shall see how things are—if they go on pleasantly perhaps I shall remain all the winter in London—otherwise I shall go abroad again.” I conclude “*things*” means H—— and his humours. Poor Mrs ——! 'tis a lonely life after all, and harsh; but it has yet some charms—liberty and independence. Her wisest way would be to dwell on these advantages alone, and to push the *désagréments* into the background.

Madame —— came in whilst I was with Mrs. ——, a plain-looking little personage, speaking a

sort of German French, with a clever, intelligent countenance, and soft eyes, that are not without charm. I am very partial to foreigners, and very apt to think them more fascinating than my own country people. When she left, Mrs. —— told me a curious history of Madame —— . She was the wife of a dragoman at Constantinople ; her husband died, or was killed ; the revolution came, and left her in a fine house, indeed, but literally without one shilling to support herself. She determined to make the best of her situation, like a wise woman, and immediately conceived the idea of letting her house to lodgers, which she did ; and the first person who took it was the father of her husband, on whom her fascinations soon made an impression, and she succeeded in becoming his wife.

At Miss ——'s, in the evening, I met a very curious person ; his profession is that of landscape painter and teacher, but his whole mind and soul seems given to astrology. He talks of this subject not as a superstitious folly, but as a deep science, given to man to guide himself and his concerns by the stars. I never would condemn as a folly that which I have not proved to be so ; neither would I readily give belief to what I have not examined into, and probably never shall examine

into ; but certainly Mr. V——'s manner of treating this subject was very extraordinary, and his keen enthusiasm extremely amusing.

Miss P—r, the authoress, was also there : she has gentle manners, and an amiable expression of countenance. I never saw a countenance more replete with sweetness, and I believe her character assimilates to the impression her personal appearance conveys, and that she is a most estimable person in private life, and "The soul keeps the promise we had from the face."

March 4th.—Lawrence had invited me to visit his studio, so I went with Lady W—. The portrait I liked most was one of Lady Melbourne, which was very like her, and less gaudy than the other pictures hanging in his room. Lady W—d made many shrewd remarks on them, some of which were not pleasing to the artist, and I felt awkward, but it is impossible to prevent her saying anything which comes into her head ; and she remained there till I was completely tired, and I am sure so was Lawrence. He offered to show me some day his collection of drawings by the ancient masters, which are said to be splendid. He is always polite and courteous to me, yet I never can persuade myself to like him.

Lady W— called on Lady H—, and insisted on making me accompany her, though I told her I was not intimate with her, and stood rather in awe of her stately manners. Lady W— would not be persuaded that I had rather not have accompanied her, so I was forced to comply with her wishes, and was agreeably surprised to find Lady H— much less formal than I had ever seen her. I should have supposed Lady W—d was the last person who would have suited her, but she appeared on the contrary extremely partial to her, and the visit was, as it usually is by Lady W—, prolonged till candles were brought. Lady H— talked a great deal upon dress, and had several new hats and caps brought down by her maid to show us. 'This confirmed what I had heard of her love for the toilette. At last, Lady W—'s eye glanced by accident to the clock, and, starting up with extreme surprise when she discovered the hour, we took our departure. Lady W— extolled Lady H— afterwards to me, up to the skies, and said she esteemed her first of all those who had ever had influence over the Regent ; that she considered her more upright and more disinterested even than Mrs. Fitzherbert. " Ah !" said Lady W—, " Mrs. ——— was the wicked one ; she was indeed a dangerous woman to have an ascendancy over the

Prince, for she would have sacrificed any person or anything to attain her ends."

Lady W— then went on to tell me a story related of this lady, which, as nearly as I can remember it, was as follows :—Twelve gentlemen were dining together, and after dinner, in speaking of different ladies, each one said he knew a woman whom he considered the most wicked person he had ever heard of, or even read of in any book. The curiosity being excited of every individual present, each person declaring that he was acquainted with *one* such lady, they all agreed to write her name on slips of paper, and to put them into a hat, and that each one should draw the pieces put in. Accordingly, said Lady W—, they did so, and on every one was written the name of the same individual. They were exceedingly shocked, added she, and all agreed to keep the matter secret; it was not known for many years, I believe, until one of the party present told it, and it got wind.

"Ah!" I replied, "*tôt ou tard tout se sçait.*" "Very true," replied Lady W—, "yet, like all truths, it is utterly disregarded, and people act and speak as if they never anticipated that their sayings and doings would be known."

In the evening I had the pleasure of meeting Catalini at Sir W. F—'s at dinner. She has very

fascinating and unaffected manners, quite unlike a professional person in her whole deportment, very lady-like and self-possessed, without being conceited. Her voice is much pleasanter in a room than it is in the theatres, and it is most mellifluous when subdued in its tones; she is altogether a lovely and bewitching syren. All the gentlemen of the party were in love with her, and paid her the greatest homage; but she does not appear to me to have a particle of coquetry, and there is a great naïveté in all she says. I was told that her virtues and exemplary conduct as a wife and mother are equal to her talents; she appeared, from what she said to me, pleased with England and the English in general; but in speaking of Lady —— and Miss ——, she did not appear to be so partial to them, and called them “the stocking blue.”

March 5th.—I was glad to receive a letter from my friend Lady ——; she writes with all the enthusiasm of her nature, on the beauties of the country through which she has been travelling. The style of her letters is careless and rambling, but so entirely unaffected and genuinely sincere, that I always take delight in receiving them. She dates from Milan, and says,—

“ Thus much further safe, dear ——, and well, and well pleased in all, except in being so far from you. Every now and then that thought comes painfully across my mind ; but one cannot reconcile all things, and I hope you will be tempted once more to come to the continent. I know your destination in that case lies wide of Florence ; but yet I think I could contrive to make it answer my purpose also. Well, so much for hope, now for fact. I left Lausanne with —— a fortnight since. The road over the Simplon is certainly one of the grandest works of man, amid the grandest works of nature. It is the finest road, the gentlest ascent, over the most rugged and the highest mountains. The sun shone brilliantly, and the masses of light and shadow were grand beyond all description. I can only say, the sort of mental excitement the scene occasioned is physically fatiguing. Strange to say, at the Simplon Inn, we enjoyed the best dinner I ever ate. The house is kept by French people ; the man is a cook, and I do assure you a first-rate artist ; his cuisine would astonish Lord Sefton, and all the gourmands in Christendom. It is not true that the road is suffered to go to decay as far as Yselle ; that is, as far as the government of the Vallais extends ; it is impossible for anything to be in better order, and I am told their Government lay

out fifteen thousand francs upon it every year;—no small sum for so poor and so wild a country. From Yselle, indeed, the matter changes, and the shabby pigmy King of Sardinia is seen in his works, or rather no works.

“ I thought of you often as we journeyed along, and of the just admiration which you would experience on passing this *imperial* road. The bridges, the passes through the rocks, the good taste in which the whole is executed—greatness—simplicity—power—these are the characteristics of this wonderful work. From Yselle till within two or three miles of D’uomo Dossola, the wildness of the mountain scene, its fierce and savage beauty, is at the highest. Then, as if a magician’s wand had effected the change, Spanish chestnuts of huge growth, vines, and cultivation burst at once upon the eye; the buildings, the people, all are changed, and Italy breathes around; but not till you reach the Lago Maggiore is this fully felt. Then indeed the softened beauty of the landscape, with all its wonders and all its balm, give perfect assurance of the *land of promise*. The rest of the road (the lake once passed) is as flat, as well cultivated, and as rich as that from Hyde Park Corner to East Sheen.

“ A great religious ceremony takes place to-day

in my dear cathedral, which I regret, for I had promised myself some hours of enjoyment in walking about it in quietude, enjoying its own impressive grandeur, and no mummary to mar the effect. In consequence of this festival, there is no opera to-night. The brilliancy of this town, its gay equipages, and handsome, well-dressed women, above all, the pleasant times I have passed here, make me lament that my stay now is to be so brief. Like you, I am fond of that which I know well, and habit confirms liking with me, even in my affection for localities. I intend to propose paying my respects to the Princess, and if she receives me, I will give you a full account of all I see or hear of Her Royal Highness. I will write to you from Florence.

“ Believe me, yours, &c.”

I went in the evening to Lady E—. Her parties consist chiefly of card-players, but there is a sprinkling of persons who converse, and it appears to me to be rather a pleasant house. Lady E— herself is ladylike, and does the honours of her house well. I sat beside Prince Cimitelli all the evening. He is accounted

clever, but, like many people with such a reputation, he is a dull, heavy person in conversation. He told me Lady E—'s history. She parted from Lord E— nominally on the score of *incompatibilité d'humeur*; "but," said the Prince in his broken English, "Dat was not de reason;" and he smiled significantly as he added, "Milord like some other person."

March 6th.—I received another letter from Mrs. —.

"DEAR —.—My consternation at hearing you had again become a denizen of England could only be equalled by my anxiety to know how you bide the pelting of these pitiless storms. But tho' my ears are always open to everything regarding you, all I have been able to gather is that nobody has heard of your being ill. But that is not enough to satisfy me, who desire so much that you should be perfectly well. One hears of new patents for carrying sweet milk, fresh butter, roast beef, &c., to the East Indies, and I am in hopes the next will be for bringing balmy zephyrs from the Mediterranean, and sunbeams from the torrid zone. En attendant these happy discoveries, I trust the east winds

will not visit you too roughly, and that the sun will never *go off you*, to use an elegant Scotticism, which, if I had the fancy of Cowley, I would have spun into a score of witty, improper, metaphysical verses for you. One of the dire consequences of your return weighs very heavy upon my conscience. I had the folly to write you a letter all full of Walter Scott's rhymes, which would first travel to Switzerland, and then follow you to England, with the whole multiplication table on its back. Mr. Wilson is about to publish a dramatic poem called 'The City of the Plague.' The title is rather alluring in a horrible way, and at this season especially, when horrors of every kind seem congenial. This is a wild, stormy, snowy day, and I feel as if a *mental horror* would be very relishing; but the literature of the present day is not of a spirit-stirring, *hair-standing* sort; everything now is addressed to the reason, nothing to the heart or fancy; and, in consequence, works of imagination are really becoming too reasonable to be very entertaining. Formerly, in *my time*, a heroine was merely a piece of beautiful matter, with long fair hair and soft blue eyes, who was buffeted up and down the world like a shuttlecock, and visited with all sorts of possible and impossible miseries. Now they are black-

haired, sensible women, who do plain work, pay morning visits, and make presents of legs of pork;—vide ‘Emma,’ which, notwithstanding, I do think a very capital performance : there is no story whatever, nor the slightest pretensions to a moral, but the characters are all so true to life, and the style is so dry and piquant, that it does not require the adventitious aids of mystery and adventure. ‘Rhoda’ is of a higher standard of morals, and very good and interesting. These are the only novels I have read these many months. I took a great pleasure in the ‘Antiquary,’ till I learnt who was the author. It is universally believed that it was written by a man of the name of Greenfield,* once a popular clergyman, but whose name it is now a scandal to mention. Have you read Paul’s Letters? Partial as I am to the author, I confess I was disappointed. I believe they are very just and well written, and profound; but they really are not very entertaining. A man of genius must feel sadly trammelled, methinks, when confined to matters of fact, especially of modern date. This book, however, is much admired by persons of taste and judgment; so, I suppose, it is my vicious in-

* How much a name may prejudice a work! and how unjustly!!

clination for high colouring that has destroyed my capacity for relishing plain sense.

“ I received a letter the other day from our mutual friend Lady ——, requesting me to mediate for her with the publishers here, respecting the sale of a manuscript for her. In the days of my youth I had a most extraordinary passion for angling, and the only drawback to my enjoyment was when *I caught a fish*, and felt it writhing on the hook and floundering at the line. Then I threw down my rod, and gave myself up to all the horrors of remorse. Now these self-same feelings I had not of late years experienced, till I received Lady ——’s last letter, and I had no sooner read it than I was assailed by all my quondam fishing pangs ; for I beheld her on the tenter-hooks of suspense, and felt her *pulling at the line* with all her might and main. I therefore instantly despatched a note to Mr. Millar, requesting him to call upon me. But, alas ! I had neither hook in his jaw nor line at his ear, and, after repeated applications, I have only now been able to obtain a private interview with him ; so that Lady —— will think me the greatest *dawdle* (to use a woman’s word) in this wide world. I wish the result of our conference had been more satisfactory ; but, alas ! it is only what my grey

imagination foreboded. He said it was quite out of the question to put a value upon a work until he had seen it, for that solely on the merits of the book the price must depend. When I spoke of Lady ——'s name as being worth thousands in itself, he shook his head, and replied that it would indeed excite a *strong sensation*, and cause a temporary run upon the book; but that was not enough; unless it was likely to become a standard one it was impossible to give a large sum for it. With regard to Miss Edgeworth, Madame D'Arblay, and those heroines of romance, he said their publishers could venture to give them almost carte blanche, for their names were now so celebrated, and their fame so firmly established and so widely diffused, that before their books were printed there were thousands and thousands of copies bespoke, besides large orders for America and the Continent; so that one must not take these literary Goliaths into the question at all. Mr. —— told me they were the publishers of "Self-control," and had sold between four and five thousand copies, besides its being still in requisition. They next bought "Marian," without reading, but upon the assurance of Mrs. Hamilton (the authoress) that it was the very best novel she had ever read. They

printed eight hundred copies of it, and only sold three hundred. In short, I got such a complete history of the uncertainty of authorship, that I have resolved never to make a trade of it. Walter Scott is flourishing like a palm tree. It seems as if one was an evil spirit to venture to express any fears lest his literary prosperity should ever diminish, but, somehow or other, no author ever yet died rich.* I trust he may be an exception to his unfortunate brethren; but is it not true that authors of the greatest merit have seldom ended their days in plenty—I mean those who depended on their talents for gain as well as fame? I am bound by every tie of gratitude to pray for this great man's continued success in his labours, for he has treated me with the greatest condescension. I can never repay the debt of thankfulness I owe Walter Scott, for this noble act of his benevolence.

You who rejoice at others' *weal* will be glad to learn Miss —— has at last obtained her heart's desire, and is married to Mr. ——. Their love has mutually borne a long and trying test, and every one who knows them rejoices at its happy reward. You will be tired to death of this interminable letter, dear ——.

“ Pray pardon yours, &c.”

* What a curious prophecy!

I went in the evening to Lady Salisbury's. Her assemblies are certainly the best of their class in London. The house is like a nobleman's, and the hostess herself has such dignified manners that they cannot fail to be courtly receptions. But all assemblies that are merely show, without the amusement of music or dancing, are dull in the long run, and, after an hour or two, I always feel very tired at such parties. What amused me most was to observe how Lady —— courted the foreign ministers, and specially the royal Duke of ——, whom she followed from room to room as if she had been his attendant in waiting. This servile homage succeeded in its object at length, and the Duke offered her his arm, to which she clung for the rest of the evening, and completely monopolized his attention. But I cannot help wondering that a woman of her rank and charms, mental and personal, should condescend to seek in such a marked manner for the attention which she should command *à moins de frais*. The strangest part of her character is, that she has *two* characters; the real one leads her to pay her court to Kings and Princes (and would to Queens, if there were such things going, for she did once pay great attention to the Princess of Wales, until she thought the extinguisher was put on Her Royal Highness's

worldly consequence), and the false or assumed character makes her pretend to despise potentates and love independence. But the latter is only a mask to hide arrogance, and to obtain power in her own person, rendering, if she could do so, every other woman insignificant. 'Tis a strange choice for a person who has a position marked out and decided, from which nobody can displace her, to be perpetually pursuing the world with whip and spur;—a thing only excusable in a parvenu or a lady of demi-fashion. I suppose it arises from a want of excitement, which, to some minds, is as necessary as food to the body, and a trivial object answers the purpose to some persons as well as a better.

It appears to me as if it were more the fashion than formerly for married ladies to flirt in this town of London, at the balls and assemblies. It is a dangerous amusement, to say the least of it; for, like children playing at a *sham* fight, which often ends in a real quarrel—that which was at first sought as a diversion becomes an interest. However, such considerations are the affair of those concerned, and I think it is very wrong to allow oneself to comment thereon; for very often, I am sure, the earnest conversation one sees passing between people in a public party

may only be relative to some other party, or a gown, or book.

Mr. R— wandered about the rooms at Lady Salisbury's all the evening. I should have liked to have known all his thoughts on the scene wherein he was moving like a clever spy. People who know him well say he is kind-hearted to those he likes; but to me there is something very tremendous in the honeyed phrases he utters to every one, accompanied, as they often are, by a smile of most malicious import.

Lady G—, Mrs. S—'s sister, is beautiful, and I took pleasure in looking on her countenance; it has such a sweet and pure expression that it stood out from all the host of faded and hacknied faces of the majority of the assemblage of persons present there.

March 7th.—I received a pretty letter from Mrs. Grant, authoress of "Letters from the Mountains," &c., in answer to one I had written, requesting her to patronize the work of a person in whom I take an interest.

"DEAR —."

"I OUGHT sooner to have acknowledged your most valued present, had I not been anxious to gather some opinions of more im-

portance than my own, regarding the performance, particularly those of the Rev. H. Walker and Morehead. These I have not yet obtained, but from what I hear from others I have no doubt of their being satisfactory. Of the excellence of the devotions in the little volume you were so good as to send me, there cannot be two opinions, drawn, as they are in substance, from the pure wells of inspiration—those sacred scriptures in which we have eternal life. Those graces of style which a person of literary acquirements and refined taste can always command, are not essentially necessary to edification; yet we read it as a recommendation of apples of gold, that they are set in pictures of silver, and a certain degree of embellishment was considered appropriate for the sanctuary.

“Your friend has, however, judiciously avoided all studied or meretricious ornament, and suited her language to the weight and solemnity of the subject. Sincere and zealous meditations must be, in all cases, instructive, but coming from a person like Mrs. —, who has not only moved in the highest circles of society, but been still more distinguished for all the charms and talents that most attract admiration, they are not merely instructive, but in no common degree ad-

monitory; they say to the young, the gay, and beautiful, those before whom the world opens all its stores of fascination, Behold a person whom all delighted to praise, to whom all these attractions were familiar, has found refuge from all these dazzling vanities, in the serious and solemn preparation for an unchangeable state, in that futurity towards which we are all hastening. I feel, dear ——, gratified by the partiality which you express for my writings. You would, more than many others, be much influenced by the subject so often alluded to, of Highland scenery and manners. You could scarcely be impartial in this instance.

“I remain yours, respectfully and faithfully,

“ ANNE GRANT.

“ *Dated 101, Prince's-street, Edinburgh.*”

By the same post I received an answer to a second letter I had addressed to Mrs. Grant:—

“ DEAR ——.

“ Having determined not to sleep without acknowledging the letter you did me the honour to write (and for which favour no

apologies were necessary), though my answer must be brief, and, I fear, unsatisfactory, I proceed to say that I am very willing, to the best of my fading abilities, to *attempt*, at least, to comply with your expressed wish in behalf of Lady —. But though my heart is still warm, and the true secret of my literary success, the love of nature and of truth, remains undiminished, the chill of fancy and the decay of a memory once singularly retentive, leave me small hope of success. Yet I must know how soon your friend thinks to conclude, or, in other words, how long I may defer my attempt to cast my mite into the treasury of her rich stores,—that I may first clear my conscience of some unanswered letters, or, if your friend's work is very urgent, defer them. I have two reasons for earnestly desiring that, if I do contrive to send anything she may think fit to accept as a humble tribute of the respect and admiration I feel towards her, it may never be known to be mine. I have refused others whom I wished very well, and would not be thought at this time of life to go out of my thorny and sombre path to gather flowers, even to weave them into the fairest garland. They are often heaven's favourites who die young. Your protégé is the less to be lamented, as, though a blameless

creature, there was no path in life open to him which he would have been well qualified to occupy. You will excuse my blunt address and total want of ceremony. I almost forgot in my haste the common courtesy due from your very respectful and faithful servant,

“ ANNE GRANT.”

“ P.S.—I send you some lines written by Mrs. Barbauld, and I *believe* not published. The subject is interesting, and the feeling which prompted them mournfully pleasing. Perhaps they might be acceptable to your friend.”

*On the King's Illness, September, 1811, by Mrs.
Barbauld.*

REST, rest, afflicted spirit ! quickly pass
Thy hour of bitter suffering ! rest awaits thee
There where, the load of weary life laid down,
The Peasant and the King repose together—
There peaceful sleep—thy quiet grave bedewed
With tears of those who loved thee. Not for thee,
In the dark chambers of the nether world,
Shall spectre kings rise from their burning thrones,
And point the vacant seat, and scoffing say,
Art thou become like us ? O not for thee,
For thou hadst human feelings, and hast walked
A man with men, and kindly charities,
E'en such as warm the cottage hearth, were thine ;
And therefore falls the tear from eyes not used
To gaze on kings with admiration fond.

And thou hast knelt at meek Religion's shrine
With no mock homage, and hast owned her rites
Sacred in every breast, and therefore rise
Affectionate for thee the orisons
And mingled prayers, alike from vaulted domes
Where the loud organ peals, and rafted roofs
Of humbler worship. Still remembering this
A nation's pity and a nation's love
Linger beside thy couch, on this the day
Of thy sad visitation, veiling faults
Of erring judgment, and not will perverse.
Yet O ! that thou hadst closed the wounds of war !
That had been praise to suit a higher strain !
Farewell ! the years rolled down the gulf of time,
Thy name has chronicled a long bright page
Of England's story ; and perhaps the babe
Who opens, as thou closest thine, his eyes
On this eventful world, when aged grown,
Musing on times gone by, shall sigh and say,
Shaking his thin grey hairs whitened with grief,
" Our fathers' days were happy." Fare thee well.
My thread of life has even run with thine,
For many a lustre, and thy closing day
I contemplate, not mindless of my own,
Nor to its call reluctant.

Now life's stormy morning for ever is past,
And the still hour of evening approaches at last ;
It comes breathing peace where no pleasure is found,
'Tis the juice of the poppy that lulls all around.
No bright setting sun does his splendour unfold,
No horizon wide flushing with purple and gold,

All shorn of his beams sinks the great orb of day,
And nature is clad in her mantle of grey.
O magical fancy ! thy empire expires,
All withered thy flow'rets, extinguished thy fires ;
Thy talisman broken, exposed to the view
Stands the desert of life, where the garden once grew.
Sensibility, syren who lures to destroy,
Adieu to thy anguish, adieu to thy joy.
Thy look was enchanting, thy soft voice deceived,
And, as nature's best bounty, thy cup I received.
I tasted—no words can its sweetness impart ;
I drank—it was poison that flowed to my heart ;
For light swim the pleasures, but deep in the bowl
Lie the struggling emotions that harrow the soul.
Indifference, 'tis true that in life's giddy morn
I ever repulsed thee with petulant scorn ;
Yet now to a level, as thou lead'st the way,
Sinks the path late so rugged I shrink to survey.
Methinks 'tis most sweet on thy breast to repose,
Scarce heeding the current of life as it flows,
Till nature in peace shall drop into the tomb,
Which thou hast already despoiled of its gloom."

From Monsieur Sismondi.

“ Vous avez eu la bonté en partant de m'encourager à vous écrire quelquefois, et cependant il s'est écoulé déjà bien long-temps depuis que je vous ai vu entreprendre ce voyage, qui ne vous causoit guère moins de tristesse qu'à ceux que vous quittiez, et je n'ai point encore profité de cette permission. Je ne sçais si vous pourrez

comprendre cette espèce de découragement, qui me dégoûte de mes propre pensées, qui me fait redouter de porter ma tristesse vers les autres, et presque de chercher dans mon propre cœur pour revêtir de mots les sentimens pénibles qu'il recèle. Mais j'ose croire que, quelque explication que vous donniez à cet abattement, dussiez vous le confondre avec une jargon commune. Vous ne croirez jamais, vous ne soupçonnerez jamais que je vous suis moins vivement attaché. Nous nous sommes trop bien entendu ; j'ai trop vivement senti ce charme inexplicable de votre caractère, qui se répand sur ceux qui vous approchent, qui les rend heureux de vous voir, de vous entendre, de sentir et de parler avec vous,—pour que cette impression s'efface jamais ; et je le crois aussi. Vous m'avez assez connue pour ne pouvoir entretenir de doute sur mes sentimens. Mais que puis-je dire qui ne soit pas empreint de ma profonde tristesse ? et cependant est-il juste d'en fatiguer les autres ? La victoire des rois sur les peuples ; des préjugés sur les idées libérales ; des petites vanités sur les nobles sentimens, pèse de partout sur moi ; il n'a pas de pays où je n'en vois les fatales conséquences, pas de jours que je n'en souffre. Les journaux de tout le continent, ceux d'une moitié de l'Angleterre, font horreur ; tous les livres qu'on imprime tiennent un langage rebu-

tant, et professent comme principe ce qui avoit long-temps été réputé l'excès de la déraison. La société que j'aimois en France est divisée par des haines forcenées. Beaucoup de gens que je connois sont dans les prisons ; ici tout esprit social est détruite ; l'intolérance d'opinion fait des progrès proportionnés à ceux de la sottise ; je vais à peine dans le monde, et je n'y passe jamais deux heures sans en rapporter une impression pénible. Combien j'ai lieu de regretter ces heureux soirées que je passois avec vous ! Mais je n'avois pas besoin de ce contraste pour les trouver charmante, et vous sçavez si je n'ai pas toujours senti quelles devroient être préféré à tout. J'avois destiné six mois à travailler à Genève, et à y amasser des matériaux pour les emporter en Italie ; ma tâche est à peu près accomplie. Depuis que j'ai quitté Copet, je n'ai pas cessé de travailler de six à huit heures par jour, et je porterai en Toscane l'ébauche des quatre dernières volumes de mon histoire ; c'est dans quinze jours environ que je compte partir, en sorte que c'est à *Pescia en Toscane* que je vous prie de me répondre. Là je vivrai dans une profonde solitude ; j'y aurais pour société essentielle ma mère, dont l'esprit et le cœur présentent, il est vrai, d'immense ressources. Mais tous les autres ne sont nullement en har-

monie avec moi, et il faudra que je renonce à parler jamais ou philosophie, ou morale, ou littérature, ou politique, ou religion—aucun de ces sujets auquel la pensée s'attache dans le naufrage de nos espérances, aucun de ceux que je trouvois tant de douceur à discuter avec vous. La pensée est contreband pour l'Italie. Ni leur éducation, ni leur gouvernement, ni leur religion, ne permettent aux Italiens d'en approcher. J'aurois ardemment désiré d'engager les ——— d'aller-en Italie en même temps que moi ; je sentois que je pouvois leur être fort utile, et elles auroient été à leur tour pour moi d'une prodigieuse ressource. Elles m'en ont long-temps flatté, et puis elles ont changé d'avis, sans qu'il fût possible d'en donner une autre raison qu'une indécision inexplicable. Dans cette solitude cependant, si j'ai moins de distraction, je verrai aussi moins de choses pénibles, j'y vivrai d'avantage avec mes amis absens, je me nourrirai plus long-temps de leur lettres : c'est vous dire combien les vôtres me seront précieuses—combien elles seront désirées. Dans un temps où l'Italie est peuplée d'Anglois, je sentirai aussi vivement le plaisir d'en voir qui me seront adressé par vous, qui me parleront de vous. J'ai bien peu de chose à leur offrir, pour les dédommager de venir me chercher dans une petite ville ; mais

elle est située dans un pays délicieux ; je le connois bien, et tout au moins je ne serois pas un mauvais Cicérone. J'y passerai probablement toute une année ; ce ne sera qu'au printemps que je reviendrai à Genève, pour retourner à Paris, et imprimer la fin de mon histoire, à la fin de l'automne de la même année. Madame De Staël a eu dans son voyage d'Italie un succès plus heureux qu'on n'osoit s'en flatter pour elle. La santé de Monsieur Rocca est infiniment meilleure, et un second hiver passé dans le sud achevera de le rétablir. On attend le Duc de Broglie d'heure en heure, peut-être est il arrivé, et après avoir passé quelques jours à Copet avec Auguste De Staël, il doit continuer sa route, pour aller épouser Albertine à Pisa. Vous en entendrez parler peut-être aussi à Monsieur de Constant, qui ne doit pas tarder de passer en Angleterre, et qui a, je pense, l'honneur de vous connoître. N'oubliez jamais, chère —, que dans la tristesse et le découragement, comme dans le bonheur, je ne puis me défaire de ce sentiment si vif et si respectueux que vous m'avez inspiré."

" Genève, ce 20 Février."

September 1st, 1820.—Since I last wrote my Diary, many strange and unlooked-for events of a

public nature have occurred, and my own private existence has also been replete with matter of painful excitement, on which I have not the courage to dwell; there are passages in life of which we would gladly efface every trace.

The public event which has most interested me personally, and also, I believe, excited the greatest emotion in the hearts of the British people, is the untimely and cruel fate of the Queen.—All her friends had long dreaded that she would place herself in jeopardy by the folly of her conduct, and their fears proved but too well founded. Her Majesty was displeased with me, owing to the misrepresentations of a mischievous busy-body, and we had had no intercourse for some time previous to her return to England. But I ventured through the medium of a trusty person to send the Princess the following advice, namely, to discharge all her foreign attendants, male and female, and to return without further delay to England. Greatly to my surprise, she followed my counsel, and on the 6th of June last she reached London. She was upon the whole well received; a very strong feeling existed in her favour, notwithstanding the many acts of imprudence which she had committed since her departure from this country. Very soon, the proceedings in the

Houses of Parliament commenced against Her Majesty, and then followed that memorable trial, which is a blot never to be effaced from the history of the reign of George the Fourth. Had he been himself a faultless husband—had it been from a respect to virtue and moral dignity that he instituted such charges against his consort, and had recourse to such degrading means to substantiate those charges as that of hiring suborned witnesses,—even in that *suppositious case*, it may be asked, are we to do evil that good may ensue? But as the *fact really* stood, the King should have been the last man in the world to denounce his wife as guilty; and the consequence of his doing so induced the general belief that his conduct was the result of private hatred. It would seem as if Heaven also considered it in the same light; for though strong evidence was brought against her—though she was proved to have been guilty of very great imprudence, and want of decorum, both as a woman and a queen—she was virtually pronounced by the laws of the land innocent of the crime with which George the Fourth charged her. Minor errors were lost sight of in the one overwhelming fact, of her being acquitted of the great offence. The Queen's conduct throughout the trial was of a very high order of moral courage, and the undaunted

temerity with which she met the charges made against her, was a strong proof of her innocence.

No guilty person could have had the audacity to challenge examination into their conduct in the manner she did ; and the result of that famous and infamous trial was the greatest triumph a woman accused of such a breach of virtue ever attained. The manner in which she was treated during the whole of the proceedings accorded with that pursued during the previous years of her residence in England. Every indignity was shown her by the King, and no residence, or any of the common decencies of life, were provided for her, much less those suitable to one who by birth and by marriage claimed alliance with the British Crown. Nothing could be more unwise than this display of inveterate hatred in minute concerns ; for it showed the nation by what a malicious spirit she was persecuted, even to the death, and it only served to rouse a deeper feeling of pity in the public mind, towards the object of such malevolence.

Mr. Brougham, whatever had been his intentions on *first* undertaking the management of the Princess of Wales's affairs, had gone too far in the business to retreat without dishonour ; so that, not to mention any feeling of interest which he now took in the Queen of England's cause, apart from mere

worldly motives, his own success depended on advocating her side as skilfully as he could ; and once being determined to use his utmost exertions in her service, the talents to do so were not wanting in him, and he displayed the most consummate power and eloquence in his speeches on this trial. Certainly, the Queen was in a great measure indebted to this extraordinarily clever man, for the brilliant termination of that investigation. The King was all powerful. The Queen destitute of any patronage or influence whatever. Her daughter, the object who might have been supposed to have rendered her more interesting to the nation, was dead ; consequently the warm support and protection shown her by the nation at large, was a noble proof that the English people *en masse* are a disinterested race, and fear not to espouse the cause of the oppressed, or take the weaker side against the strong and the powerful.

Many of the peers, and also other private individuals, who had entertained the strongest prejudices against her Majesty, hastened to congratulate her on the termination of the trial. But though she had had the courage to go through that trying scene with the utmost fortitude, and though her spirits had never for a single moment, either in private or in public, sunk beneath the

weight of suffering imposed upon her, still when the trial was over, and that she was acquitted, she did not evince the satisfaction which might have been expected ; she appeared worn out in mind and body. The desolateness of her private existence seemed to make her very sorrowful : she appeared to feel the loss of her daughter more than at any previous moment, and she wept incessantly. Perhaps bodily weakness and over exertion had some part in occasioning this gloom.

On the last day of the trial, when requested to retire and take some refreshment, she peremptorily refused to do so, and on some persons offering the Queen refreshments which they had brought for their own use, she declined accepting them, saying, “ I can take a chop at the King’s Head if I am hungry ; ”—alluding to the tavern bearing that sign near the House of Lords. There was much ready wit in that reply, but it was, perhaps, ill-timed, and she was never afterwards heard to make a joke, or seen to smile. The injuries and unkindness which she had so long borne with admirable patience, had at last crushed the elasticity of her disposition, and the loneliness of her fate appalled her.

Once again she made a struggle, and an ill-judged one, to enforce her rights, and to be

present at the coronation of George the Fourth. But unless she went in her proper place to that ceremony, she should not have condescended to go at all. In that instance, also, the King showed a very shallow judgment, and betrayed his personal dislike to her ; since she had been publicly proclaimed fit to share his throne, and bear the name of Queen, he should have permitted her, if only from policy, to sit beside him at the coronation ; he should have stifled the feelings of the man, and treated her with the assumed courtesy of the monarch. It would have passed current with many for a better feeling, and gained him popularity ; but he did *so* dislike her, that even he, who was a proverbially polite and courtly prince, could not assume civility towards the Queen. She very foolishly attempted to force an entrance within the Abbey, and was repulsed by the common soldiers.

The persons who attended the Queen at the latter end of her life were faithful and attached to her, but they were not persons calculated to give her the best advice. She endeavoured, poor unhappy Princess, to amuse herself, but as — informed me, she took no pleasure in anything. She once saw Prince Leopold, and his manner was affectionate and feeling. From all I ever heard of him, he is a good-hearted man, but timid and self-

interested, and he was kept in such order by the King, that the only visit he ever paid his mother-in-law was in secret, unattended, and without any witnesses, except the Queen's lady.

A very short period elapsed between the trial and the Queen's death. Her illness was sudden, and she was for some hours ignorant of her danger. When she became aware of her awful situation, she called to some of the attendants, and said, "I forgive all my enemies, I owe no one any ill will, although they have killed me at last;" or words to that effect. A curious circumstance occurred whilst she was on her death-bed, the night or rather the morning on which she expired. A boat passed down the river, filled with some of those religious sectarians who had taken peculiar interest in her fate; they were praying for her, and singing hymns as they rowed by Brandenburgh House; and at the same moment a mighty rush of wind blew open all the doors and windows of the Queen's apartment, just as the breath was going out of her body. It impressed those who were present with a sense of awe, and added to the solemnity of the scene.

Thus died Caroline, Queen of England. Her fate must excite compassion in the sternest hearts; yet doubtless her premature decease was ordained

in mercy. Her life, as far as human beings could judge, would not have been a happy one had it been prolonged. Divested by the King of the pomps and pleasures of royalty, she was at the same time debarred from the enjoyments of private life ; she had no relatives who cared for her, and, from what I knew of her nature, she was warm hearted, and would have pined without some object to love and be loved by ; so that her death was a happy release from loneliness and persecution.

The King's malice followed her to the grave, and the most indecent measures were resorted to in the arrangement of her funeral. The Queen's remains were not permitted to lie in English ground, and objections were even made to her being buried at Hanover. Finally, however, her body was suffered to be placed in the vault of the royal family at that city. But the crown and insignias of royalty on the coffin were taken off, and I have been told that nothing but her name, " Caroline," stands to record who lies within that narrow house. The candle that is taken into that royal mausoleum to show the visitors the coffins, has always been placed on hers, so that the velvet is covered with wax, and otherwise soiled. Thus do her remains, even in the grave, meet with the same disrespect she endured throughout life ; but her spirit, I trust,

is at peace, and happy in the world above. I say and feel this from the bottom of my heart, and so ends probably the last mention I shall ever make of the Queen. If during her life she often gave cause for censure (in as far, at least, as appearance warrants), in her death she commands respect and sympathy ; and it will be for the page of the future historian to decide how far her virtues were her own, and how far her follies were occasioned by the force of circumstances, and the cruel treatment she received. In making this summary of her character and her fate, one feeling alone predominates, which is that of pity for her sufferings.

ADDITIONAL LETTERS

FROM

THE PRINCESS OF WALES.

ADDITIONAL LETTERS

FROM

THE PRINCESS OF WALES.

February 6th, 1810.

It is ages, my dear ——, since I have heard from you: pray do me the kindness to write to me soon, and enliven the dulness of my sojourn here, by some of your eloquence. I saw yesterday an old friend of yours, Lady ——. I believe it is fifteen years since we met. I have never before seen her since her marriage. I do not find her at all altered; indeed, I think her pretty now, and I did not as a girl think her so. Her eyes are lovely: to be sure that is her only beauty. She inquired much after you, but appeared to be in very low spirits. She talked with anxiety and feeling about her husband, who is

again going to leave her to follow his trade, and has not yet recovered the Walcheren fever.

Doubtless, my dear —, you have heard of the overwhelming calamity which has happened to Lord Auckland's family. About three weeks ago his eldest son, Mr. Eden, a young man of twenty-two, in perfect health and spirits, and highly prosperous as to worldly affairs (he possessed a place for life of two thousand per annum), went out at nine o'clock from his father's house in Old Palace Yard, and, saying he should return in an hour, he has never since been heard of. Hitherto every search has been made in vain : not a trace is to be found. People imagine he is drowned ; but you may suppose *de* grief of the unhappy parents on *dis* melancholy occasion. Yet our friend Telemachus could not resist making a pun on this *funebre* event, and said, " Oh ! *dey* ought to look for him in *Eden* ; he must be there."

I had a party last evening, and much lamented your absence ; for it was more agreeable than such assemblies are in general. I had the Persian ambassador, and the two Deshays danced and Catalani sung, and all de folks appeared to be pleased, so I was satisfied. I like to see people look content, which they do not often do in this country, I must say. *My better* half, or my

worse, which you choose, has been ill, I hear, but nothing to make me hope or fear.

Pray burn this piece of *high treason*, my dear

Lord Byron did inquire for you also, I must not forget to mention. He was *all couleur de rose* last evening, and very pleasant; he sat beside me at supper, and we were very merry: he is quite another man when he is *wid* people he like, and who like him, than he is when he is *wid* others who do not please him so well. I always tell him there are two Lord Byrons, and when I invite him, I say, I ask the agreeable Lord, not the disagreeable one. He takes my *plaisanterie* all in good part, and I flatter myself I am rather a favourite with this great bard.

And now I must release you, my dear —, from this long epistle, after telling you that I am pretty well, and try to fight with *de blue devils*, which, alas! often get the better of me. However, I am always—sick or well, gay or sad,—

Your affectionate

C. P.

The Princess of Wales to the same.

DEAR ———.

THE first intelligence I must give you is of ———, who you will be glad to learn is safely arrived. The next is a piece of news, which I have just heard, which will, I know, shock you. Mrs. Duff is dead, in consequence, it is entirely believed, of the bite of a favourite dog, who was mad. I have not seen anything of *dis* poor lady for so many years, that I feel more indifferent to her death than I should otherwise have done; besides, she was very ill-natured about me: my lord and master having bound Mr. Duff to his service, and made him swear hatred to me, he of course made his wife think as he did; but all those who knew her, said she was truly amiable.

Nothing can be more dull, dreary, and dismal than London. People do nothing but croak; and I am almost tired of asking them to dinner, they are all so cross and melancholy. Now, as I am both myself, I would wish to get a few bright spirits around me.

Lady ——— is returned from the Hoo in raptures of all the people she met there; amongst whom were Mrs. Sheridan, with whom she is amazingly satisfied, and cries up her singing, and

everything belonging to her. Then there was also Mrs. Wilmot there, the lady who models so well, and whose flying and dying horse are reckoned so admirably executed.

Thom. Sheridan, I hear, is gone abroad, dying. I never knew much of him; for he also was one of the great Mahomed's favourites, to whom, by the way, the latter has not behaved with the most loyal bounty, or steady friendship.*

As to myself, I have nothing agreeable to tell you, dear ——. I hear plenty of ill-natured stories, put about by dat old witch de Queen; but I say to *dose* who tell them, You do me no good by repeating these reports. You do not gain favour with me either by so doing, I assure you. I hate gossips; and those who really wish me well, will not seek to make me unhappy by repeating the malevolent speeches of my enemies. When I answered Lady Oxford in this fashion de oder day, she did look quite *ébahie*, and ashamed of herself. 'Tis true, my dear ——, 'pon honour, I never wish to be told these things. I know them to be said. I know quite enough, God knows, and wish never to know more, if I can help it.

* This is a mistake. The Prince never ceased to admire and acknowledge the talents and fascination of this delightful man, and presented him with a thousand pounds when he left England.

I think Mr. Gell must be in love, or else he is seized with this general epidemic of gloom ; for he hardly speaks at all. Mr. Lewis I have not seen for a month. I heard he had been *wooed* to Carlton-house ; but I do not believe it, nor do I think the Prince would suit him, or he the Prince : but perhaps I am mistaken. All *de gay* part of London assemble at the Priory, where there are private theatricals going on with great *éclat*. There are two young couples staying there,—Lord and Lady Aberdeen ; Mr. Lambe and Lady Caroline are, I am told, patterns of conjugal affection, admiring each other, and never happy if absent from each other one half hour. I should like to see these theatricals, but the Marquis has not asked me to his house this year. The wind is not blowing kindly towards me, my dear ——, from any quarter, so I must expect to be slighted ; and I try to be *philosophe*, *mais ce n'est pas si facile*.

I have not yet seen poor Roscius. It is the fashion to abuse him as much this year as it was to praise him up to the skies last season. I feel sorry for this child.

Lady Sheffield proposes leaving me on the plea of ill health. I have my suspicions *dat* she has been made to quit my household ; but not one word of this, if you please, to anybody. I shall

regret her rather ; but it does not put me au désespoir. She is not half so agreeable as her sisters, and I have some one in my eye whom I should prefer. But, my dear ——, there is a cruel influence at work against me, and *he* would like to prevent anybody of *qualité* being about me.

Adieu, and believe me to remain,

Ever most devotedly yours,

C. P.

The Princess of Wales to the same.

DEAR ——.

I AM in a state of rage being just returned from a visit to the Queen, who received me in a most cavalier manner. Luckily I restrained myself whilst in her august presence ; but I could have abused her gloriously, so angry did I feel at the old Beguin. I will not submit again in a hurry to such a reception. She never asked me to sit down. Imagine such a piece of ridiculous pride ! And when I asked after my poor dear uncle, and said I should like to see him, she made me for answer, “The King is quite well, but he will not see you.” I replied, “Madame, I shall ask his Majesty himself ;” she said *nothing*, but smiled her abominable smile of derision.

Talking of kings and queens, I heard the other day, from a lady who lives a good deal at court and with courtiers, that a most erroneous opinion is formed in general of the Princess E——. The good humour for which she has credit is only an outward show, and this is exemplified in her conduct to the poor Princess A——, who is dying—quite given over, though her decay may be slow and tedious. The Princess —— and S—— are devoted to her; but Princess E—— treats her with the most cruel unkindness and ill-temper. So much for court gossip. Thank God, I do not live with them! Everybody believes Princess A—— is married to Mr. F——y, and they say she has confessed her marriage to the King, who is miserable at his expected loss of his daughter, who is his favourite; and I do not wonder, for she always appeared to me the most amiable of the whole set. So she is destined to be taken away. Well—perhaps it is as happy for *her, poor ting*, that she should; for there is not much felicity, I believe, amidst dem all. When I left the royal presence, I thought to myself, You shall not catch me here again in a hurry. No, truly, I would rather have noting to do with de royal family, and be treated as a cipher, than be subject to such haughtiness as I was shown to-day.

I have let out all the ebullition of my wrath to you, chere ——. Do not repeat it though, for the more said, the less easy is it to mend matters ; so *bouche close*, and heart cased in iron ; and the Princess de Galle may be able to live in dis uncivil pays, only sometimes it is necessary to open de safety valve, to let some of one's feelings escape, or else I should be suffocated.

Farewell ; *croyez-moi toujours votre très-sincère amie.*

C. P.

The Princess of Wales to the same.

MY DEAR ——,

The Rawdons are not with me, owing to some balls and masquerades, but I hope next Sunday they will come till Wednesday.

There was yesterday a breakfast at Lady Dartmouth's upon the heath. I had only the benefit of hearing the Staffordshire band, as I was neither invited, nor would I have gone ; for I hate people who change towards one, according as de sun shines upon one, or withdraws his face.

I am on the point of setting out for Kensington to meet my daughter ; for which reason I have only time to add, that I am afraid I did not explain

myself well in my last letter on the subject of Mr. E——, the bookseller in Fleet Street; and since that time I have further heard, that he is certainly paid by my enemies to write some trumpery catchpenny book against me; for which reason I am more anxious than ever that our plan should be put into execution, to be an antidote against the poison which is to be propagated from ear to ear this winter. I thank you also a thousand times for the letter of Telemachus, which has been very amusing to me, and am happy to find that he is in spirits, knowing that he had been so unwell for some months, but having the happiness of writing to you has given a new zest to his spirits and to his poetical effusions.

I have heard that Mr. Crawford Bruce has left Lady Hester, and that he is expected every day in England; I have also been told that Lady Hester is now quite devoted to the French nation, and has given up the English for it.

The advertisement in the papers which you saw in the evening paper, called “The News,” is nothing more or less than owing to threatening letters that have been addressed to different members of the present administration, that they are to meet the same fate of Mr. Perceval. The reward

is two hundred guineas ; but the anonymous will not give his name till the money is paid.

This is the whole of my budget of news to-day, and believe me,

Your most sincere and affectionate,

C. P.

Dated Saturday, October 31st.

The Princess of Wales to the same.

DEAR —.

I CAN never sufficiently express how thankful I am to you for finding me a house. Mr. Siccard goes this morning to speak to Mr. Hugh to have it brushed up and cleaned immediately, that in the course of ten days I may call it my own house ; I shall put some of the furniture from Kensington belonging to me into it, to make it a little more comfortable. To be sure, I do not like the situation of the house ; but, as I have no choice, I must take the first house I can meet with. Your description of the one in Stratton-street has much amused Lady Glenbervie and Lady Charlotte Lindsay. I dare say it strikes the prudish Lord Archibald the same as you, that he will not allow his sister to lose her character in that pretty bower. She intends to sell it for two thousand pounds. I

hope you have been much amused in town at your waltzing parties. Mrs. Beauclerck was so fatigued that she could not bring her tired limbs to Blackheath to-day. I did not much regret her, as she was last Wednesday dreadfully out of humour.

I have seen nobody, except mayors of Rochester and town-clerks, and such pretty men, that I am sure they would have been an entertainment to you to have seen them. Some resembled Dutch burgomasters, others were like aldermen, so fat and jolly-looking. They were all very civil to me, and did me respectful homage. Yet I was very tired of their fine speeches, and felt it *beaucoup d'honneur mais peu de plaisir*, to be set up in state for three hours receiving their addresses. Joan of Arc was in waiting, and looked very grand. She is a good creature, and I believe attached to me very sincerely; but oh! mein Got, she is wearisome sometimes. Job would have got into a passion *wid* her, I am sure.

Addio for the present. May all good attend you, my dear.

C. P.

The Princess of Wales to the same.

MY DEAR ——.

I AM much shocked to be under the ne-

cessity of so soon encroaching upon your leisure hours. You will be sorry to hear that Mr. S. L. Bernard has broke a blood-vessel, and the faculty have ordered him to go almost immediately into the country for his recovery. But as his place in the War Office keeps him so confined that he is never able to breathe the fresh air, his family is anxious, if it were possible, for him to obtain the situation of barrack-master, which is understood to be in the gift of Mr. Arbuthnot, in the environs of ten or thirty miles from London; as the close confinement, and the very laborious appointment he holds under Government, would otherwise soon put an end to his existence. You will, I am sure, therefore, be kind enough, my dear ——, to write in my name to Mr. Arbuthnot, to wish him joy on his nuptials, and as I trusted he would be in good humour to grant my request, that the first vacancy which may occur in the department near London, in the place of barrack-master, would be given to Mr. Bernard. I understand that Mr. Arbuthnot is at this moment at his new uncle's, Lord Westmoreland's, at Apethorpe. I must also mention that Mr. Bernard does not wish to have his present situation taken away, until he is certain of another; and the business at the War Office being so great now, he cannot venture to ask

leave of absence for several months ; and he is under the apprehension in that case to leave his present situation. I venture to hope that my request will be granted by Mr. Arbuthnot ; pray let me know as soon as you receive his answer.

Lady Oxford, poor soul, is more in love this time than she has ever been before. She was with me the other evening, and Lord Byron was so cross to her (his Lordship not being in a good mood), that she was crying in the ante-room. Only imagine if any one but myself had discovered the fair *Niobe* in tears ! What a good story it would have made about the town next day ! for who could have kept such an anecdote secret ?

Believe me for ever yours,

C. P.

The Princess of Wales to the same.

DEAR ———.

I WAS happy to learn your safe arrival at ———. I have no news to tell you, except Mademoiselle Grammont's marriage to Lord Ossulston. The Devonshires speak of it as certain. The wedding clothes are bought, and the young people are *desperately* attached, and pledged to each other. The opposition of the father, Lord Tan-

kerville, however, still continues, and the ceremony has been twice put off after the day was fixed. Of scandal there is an abundance afloat as usual, and I suppose some of these reports have reached you. Indeed, that makes me almost fear to repeat them, lest it be to you a twice-told tale. But I take my chance of this. Much is said of Lord T——n's attentions to the young Duchess of R——d. Lady T——n is evidently very sad, poor woman; and her husband's attentions are certainly not directed towards herself.

The report about Mrs. Siddons and Lawrence I always thought most shameful, and never believed it, and rejoice that it is proved to be false.

Lord L——n has made, I am told, great offers to Miss H——n, the authoress, to tempt her to undertake the superintendence of the education of his children. If she consents, they will be fortunate, should she be but half as sensible as her excellent book on education. Lady L——'s desertion of her children and husband, once so beloved, is disgraceful.

There is at present one universal topic of conversation in London—the young Roscius, and but one opinion about him, that he is an extraordinary creature—an exquisite actor—and, for his age, a prodigy. People quite rave about him, and the

houses overflow ; but I have not yet been to see him. I seldom feel curiosity to see what all the world are mad about. I have a spirit of contradiction in me, which makes me feel I should very likely differ from the multitude in my opinion of this *phenomenon*. Adieu, ma chère, forgive my long *prose*, and believe me, ever, your attached

C. P.

The Princess of Wales to the same.

MY DEAR —.

I HOPE you will be able to dine with me to-morrow, as I have got together what I trust may be a pleasant party, if the people chuse to be agreeable ; but that is always a doubtful question —so often pleasant folks are very dull, and stupid ones the contrary : the last exert themselves to do their *petit possible*, whilst the others, with greater means, will not condescend to pour out of their abundance. However, let us hope all the wits and wise heads I have collected for my little party to-morrow will be communicative ; and do let me have the pleasure of your company, chère.

The Duchess of Gordon's is the only house open just now, and people are all so busy about *de* tiresome politics, dey think of noting else. Lord

Gwydir and Lady Willoughby are here, till the government is settled. There is another examination of the physicians by the Privy Council to-day, and Parliament meets to-morrow and will not adjourn till something is settled. Some people think the King will die, others that he will remain as he is; but at his age a complete recovery is not to be hoped, though the royal family have most wonderful constitutions. As to me, no changes, I feel sure, will make any difference in my lot; so I remain very indifferent to them all. The world is decidedly cutting me, right and left, since my poor uncle's relapse. *Mais que voulez-vous?* —'tis the way of the world.

Miss Owenson makes a great sensation at the Priory. I hear she is pretty, and she sings, dances, and performs all sorts of feats.

Au revoir, dear ——,
And believe me, yours affectionately,
C. P.

The Princess of Wales to the same.

Friday, Blackheath.

DEAR ——.

Here I am again, in the solitude of this sequestered place. I found it useless to remain

in London, for every one has flown away, the poor King's increased illness having put a stop to all gaieties. Every body thinks he is going to die. Though he is not able to befriend me, yet I shall feel more desolate still when he is gone, and there will then be no restrictions on the tyranny of the Regent.

I am not a coward, dear —, and *tink* I could bear most suffering; yet I felt my heart smite the other day when I read a curious letter, sent me by an anonymous, written well, and full of fearful predictions as to my future fate. I cannot suppose why it was sent me, since *de writer* asked for no money or bribe, nor appeared to wish me evil, but rather to lament my fate.

Amongst other things it contained, the writer said,—when I was Queen I should not be suffered to remain at Kensington, for that that would be too near the other Court; and meaning, I suppose, that two Kings of Brentford could not reign peaceably together. My informer also said they thought I might very likely be sent to Holyrood House, and play the part of a second Mary Queen of Scots. What *tink* you, dear —, of this strange intelligence?

Every body except me is longing for the change, and hoping they know not what from the poor old

King's death. The Duchess of Gordon is at home to whist players, *au reste* there is not a door open in London, I believe; and people have disputed with Taylor about the opera subscriptions, and there has only been two operas, with nobody at them, as none of the boxes are taken this year. In short, all is *bouleversé*, and Heaven knows *who* or what will set things in order again.

So old Queensberry is dead at last! I had a weakness for him, and so I believe he had for me. I hear General Wemyss is to have a lawsuit with Lord Wemyss about the succession, which he thinks he has a right to. The Duke's disposal of his money is very confused, and there are so many revocations, after he has left the legacies, nobody knows who has got anything. Lord Yarmouth gets the chief part, or rather his *chère moitié*.

I have been much tormented lately by the advice of different friends—some commending my plans—some abusing me and telling me I was ill-advised, and my time ill-chosen for bringing forward my wrongs. Think of Miss —— telling me de oder day that the royal family never abused me; I laughed in her face and said, “Does it not rain?” pointing out of the window when it was pouring: she looked very foolish, and held her tongue ever

after. Yet, do you know, though *she* talked nonsense, I have been thinking also that every body is so busy about the war just now, and Government is very strong, so that perhaps it would be well to *retirer mon épingle du jeu* till the question of the Catholics, East India Charter, &c., is decided, *pour mieux sauter*, and shall consult wiser heads than mine thereon.

People can't attend to minor things. The King may die, or there may be a peace, or a destruction of the "Beast," as Lewis calls Buonaparte, which might all be in my favour, as making more money going; and I should gain praise from de *publick* by enduring my present state patiently a few months longer perhaps, and at present it would be considered quite a *party question*, not concerning me individually.

Think of the impertinence, dear, of Lady Oxford saying to me, "I wish the Princess Charlotte would learn to curtesy, for she has a most familiar *nod* that is not at all royal." I made her no answer.

And now, dear ——, you will be weary of this eternal letter, so I will say adieu for the present, and beg you to believe me,

Yours affectionately,

C. P.

From the Princess of Wales to the same.

DEAR ———.

I FEAR you have thought me very unkind not to have written to you before this ; but I have been so annoyed about my daughter, Princess Charlotte, I have not had power to tink of anything else. She was very unwell for some days, and though I begged hard, the Regent and the old stony-hearted Queen would not let me see her.

To tell you God's truth, I know not how long I shall be able to go on bearing all my sorrows. Come to me at Kensington on Tuesday next, at three o'clock, and I will then tell you more ; till then adieu. I reserve all the rest of my budget for *vive voix*, and remain yours, &c.,

C. P.

P.S. My poor daughter wrote to me to tell me how she did herself every day, knowing the barbarity of those about her who would not let me go to her.

The Princess of Wales to the same.

Dated Kensington.

WHY did you not come last evening to Rosamond's Bower, as Lewis calls this refuge for the

destitute Princes and Princesses? I had Lord Byron and the dear Gells, and Craven and Lady Oxford, Mr. Beauclerk and Lord Henry, and we were very merry I assure you. It was daylight before we parted. We had also, I forgot to say, a General Zublikroff, just imported from Russia, who was an excellent person for Gell to play off his witticisms upon, and he made the most of the opportunity. He told him the Regent was dying of love for Lady Dartmouth, and that she was the reigning favourite just now, and the goddess to whom he should pay court if he wanted a favourable reception from the Prince. The goose believed it all like gospel, and amused us very much with his innocence and ignorance.

To speak of more sad and serious matters, I have not seen Princess Charlotte for nearly five months. She is outrageous at the thoughts of leaving this country, and her unnatural father assured her that she never would have an establishment in this country; but I have advised her to be firm, and not frightened, and I think she will conquer. She is no child of mine if she submit to such tyranny.

I went yesterday to the meeting annually held of the National Education. I went with Lady Elizabeth Whitbread, and I was well received and

applauded, which I know it will give your kind heart pleasure to learn; also Mr. Whitbread did make me a very pretty speech. I had Lady Charlotte Lindsay and Lady Carnarvon to escort me, and sat by the Dukes of Sussex and Kent—the first chairman of the meeting. There—what will the Regent say to that? I hear the Grand Duchess is charming in her manners, and has a sort of intelligence which my informer (I suppose forgetting he spoke to one of the unfortunate race) said was quite new in *de'Princess* line. After this, I need scarcely say it was Mr. Ward who made dis speech. The Duchess held a drawing-room at Devonshire House the other evening. I never have *signe de vie* now from any of dat set, I mean G. L—w, W. C—s,—oh no! dey are too wise to court *de setting* sun.

I am interrupted, so good bye.

Croyez moi pour la vie,
Yours, most affectionately,

C. P.

The Princess of Wales to the same.

MY DEAR ———.

AFTER a second reflection, which the moralists assure us is the best of *all*, I shall be satis-

fied with the sum of £300, as I verily believe £500 is quite out of the reach of possibility at this period. I am much sorry for all the dreadful trouble I put you to on my miserable account.

You will be sorry to hear of Mrs. Beauclerk having lost her youngest son, in consequence of which she is in the greatest affliction. It was quite unexpected.

I am afraid I shall not have the pleasure to see you to-morrow at Lady Anne Barnard's breakfast, as I intend to send an excuse, knowing it will be a very dull party there. I cannot begin my day with tiresome people. I hope you will be able to come to Kensington on Friday, on which evening T. Campbell promised me to read his lectures to us. In case you meet my mother at Lady A. Barnard's, I prepare you that she intends to pay you visits, and to ask you often to the house to dinner; now, as her parties, dear good soul, are rigorously dull, I should think the most prudent way would be that you inform her that you are to be absent from town for some time, to avoid being made a victim of; her entertainments are *de* dullest ever invented. I am out of favour, but really I do not deserve it, so I try not to trouble my poor head with unnecessary evils, having so much to plague me that I cannot get rid of. I give a dinner on

Sunday the 28th to Lord Grey and the Duke of Gloucester. Think you *dat* would be a party that would suit the ——? And now I will not tire you any longer, but only wish you much amusement at your ball, dinner, and concert.

I remain, yours, &c.

C. P.

In reading the above letter it is impossible not to regret how many advantages the unhappy writer of it threw away and contemned. For instance: the Princess never would avail herself of the kind protection of respectable persons, unless they happened to amuse her. She had an aversion to dulness; and would have risked solid benefits to gratify her thirst for amusement for a few passing moments.

The Princess of Wales to the same.

October 9th, 1813.

NOTHING but discretion has prevented me from writing sooner to you, my dear ——, and also having had no pleasant news to entertain you with. Sir Harry Englefield has left under my care a most beautiful maroon morocco portfolio for you, wherein all the witticisms, songs, and drawings have been collected for your perusal; but Mrs.

Arbuthnot, who has left town for five weeks, is the cause of my not sending it to you. The —— never came to take leave of me, though they told Miss Garth that they intended to do so:—*ainsi va le monde*. I am becoming more and more insignificant every day, and cannot say I feel sure of having a single friend in England! It is a melancholy position, my dear ——, to be thus *isolé*, but I must bear my fate, and keep up a good courage so long as I can. How long that may be, God he knows. I am ashamed of wearying you with my lucubrations, dear ——, but you are always indulgent to my miserable self, and truly one must confide one's sorrows to somebody.

Mr. Ward has been in town since ten days, but he has not honoured Kensington with his witticisms and sarcasms. I was told the Regent wished to turn him away from me; *dat* is possible, but it would not break my heart; he is such an odd being, one cannot depend upon him.

We go on here at Kensington in a *humdrum* way, and many days I dine by myself in my little room, and see only my two deputy guardian angels, only that they may see I am alive and well. The following week will be a little more lively, as dear Lady Glenbervie will take charge of my welfare, my soul and my mind, and all my earthly worth

and celestial. By the frank which this letter will receive, you will see who dines with me to-day, and that we are still in expectation of the gentle Devons.

Believe me, ever yours,

C. P.

The Princess of Wales to the same.

MY DEAR —.

I SEND you back your paper, and I shall take care of the — letter concerning our plan about our mutual friend's letters to be published. I have some particular reason that the title should be "Genuine Documents found amongst the papers of the ever-to-be-lamented Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Spencer Perceval, and that in the year 1806, on the 11th of June, Mr. Perceval undertook the charge of very valuable letters and papers which were in the Princess's possession from the period that she came to this country, till the demise of Mr. Perceval. No other inducement can be the motive of laying them before the eyes of the public, but to show how much this illustrious personage has suffered from the traducers and slanderers of her honour; and every British heart will feel the justice of her cause, and espouse it with energy and vigour."

This is only a rough sketch of the picture ; I shall write to you more at length next Monday. I wish I could see you for an hour, as I think by word of mouth everything is better explained.

Ever yours, &c.

C. P.

The Princess of Wales to the same.

I HAVE been much amused with your remark concerning husbands, and I trust, dear ——, you will retain the same sentiment for ever, as I all my life thought husbands were only a creditable evil, and men in general a necessary plague. But so much about nothing.

I send you the enclosed answer from Messrs. Drummond, which is a very laconic one. I am still in hopes that H——, by his influence, will succeed in my negotiation, as I really should not know how to turn myself if it should not succeed. I must tell you an unpleasant circumstance which occurred to me the other evening. I was in the ante-room ; Mr. M—— and Lord L—— were talking together in the drawing-room, waiting for me, and I heard Lord L—— say, “ The Princess is so vain and foolish, no one can do her any good ; her English is the most ridiculous language any one ever made use of, and I could scarcely help

laughing the other night, when she said to me, 'Give me my wails.' "

I did not stay to listen to any more of what these treacherous "friends" of mine might have to say about me, but I thought to myself, then why do you come so often to my dinners, &c., and I determined they should not be asked again in a hurry. However, I went in to them, and tried to be as civil as I could, but I felt furious when they made me fine compliments, and I soon dismissed them. So much for courtiers. I send you Madame De Stael's pamphlet, and remain yours,
C. P.

The Princess of Wales to the same.

MY DEAR —.

I HAVE been busy all this week trying to make up a match for Lady A. H——. I have set my heart on getting her married some how or other to some man; she would be so much more agreeable if she was married; at present she is so full of old maid's whims and prudery, it is quite tiresome to be under her surveillance.

Lady Oxford has no thought but for Lord B——. I wonder if she will succeed in captivating him. She *can* be very agreeable when she pleases, but

she has not pleased to come near me for this long time past ; she has quite forgotten that Kensington Palace used to be a convenient place to see certain folks, and be seen by them ; *n'importe, ça m'est bien égal* ; she does not make *le plus ou le beau temps* to me, only it shows what her friendship is worth, and how little gratitude there is in her nature. Lord Rivers, I think, is a little mad, but very interesting. Lady —— is in a great fright that Sir W. G—— is falling in love with her. I do not see the tender passion growing, but perhaps I am shortsighted : Lady —— is not apt to be vain. I wish you good night, my dear ; my eyes are beginning to gather straws, as you English say, so no more from yours, &c.

C. P.

The Princess of Wales to the same.

LAST night I gathered together, my dear, a room full of people, and when I did look round at them, I said to myself, *à quoi bon* this dull assemblage of tiresome people ? and it so happened they were all ugly, and I longed to get them out of my sight, yet I could not send dem away, having made them come. De fact is, I know not what to do ; I am tired, or rather sad, because I have no grande in-

térêt to busy myself with. A Princess, and no Princess—a married woman, and no husband, or worse than none!—never was there a poor devil in such a plight as I am.

Lady Euphemia Stewart, that old commère, talked to me till I thought my ears never would be able to hear again. She thought I listened. Well, no matter. What think you I did? I dare say they all said I was mad. I sent them all away, ordered the carriages, and set off wid a chosen few to the play. The first one made me cry; and, strange to tell you, I felt a satisfaction in being able to weep. And den de second piece was a farce, and it made me laugh; so dat amusement compensated for the dullification of the first part of the night. Little Lewis came into the box: he affected to be sentimental; dat is always laughable in him, and I quizzed him. I do not think he enjoyed the fun.

My dragonne de Virtue has been sick for some days, so I am in the utmost danger of being run away with by some of the enchanters who come to relieve locked-up Princesses. No hopes of getting *the dragonne* married; no one will venture to espouse Joan of Arc. Dey are all afraid of de Amazon, and I am not much surprised.

Ever yours,

C. P.

From the Princess of Wales to the same.

I SHALL see Mr. Brougham next Sunday, as he is my counsellor and chief adviser. He thinks it his duty first to inform me of it before he gives his final answer in the newspapers.

Many thanks for the interest you have taken in the unexpected event of my brother's death. It was a happy release for him, as he was in a delicate state of health from his cradle. My mother has not suffered in the least from this occurrence.

I have just been calling at Lady Oxford's door to inquire for her and the new-born little ruffian; both are doing well. The only news I can tell you is, that the Duchess of R—— is going to lie in of a marvellous child. Her husband is as old as de hills; but no one says any harm of her; indeed she is universally extolled.

I had almost forgotten, dear ——, to wish you a happy new year, which I now beg to do wid all my heart, and remain

Yours, &c.

C. P.

The Princess of Wales to the same.

August 7th, 1814.

I AM on the eve of sailing, which will be to-morrow evening, as the wind is favourable, in the Jason frigate. Another brig is to convey all

our baggage, luggage, and carriages. Captain King represents Jason himself. Only tink, my dear —, what His Royal Highness de Duke of — said to him: “You are going to take de Princess of Wales in your ship. You be a d——d fool if you do not make love to her.” Mein Gott! dat is de morality of my broders-in-law.

I rejoice in the thought of so soon being far off from all of dem. I shall be at Brunswick, *Deo volente*, by the 15th. I intend only to remain in my native country ten or fifteen days, after which I shall set out for Switzerland. My intention also is to remain at Naples for the winter. I transcribe the following quiz on the Emperor for your amusement, and have nothing else to say worthy of you. I will only add that I hope you will take my best wishes for your happiness and welfare, till we meet again. With these sentiments I remain for ever,

Yours, &c.

C. P.

Copy of the Testament de Napoleon, written in the Princess of Wales's handwriting.

Je lègue aux Enfers mon génie ;
 Mes exploits aux aventuriers ;
 A mes partisans infamie ;
 Le grand livre à mes créanciers ;

Aux François l'horreur de mes crimes ;
 Mon exemple à tous les tyrans ;
 La France à ses Rois légitimes,
 Et l'hôpital à mes parens.

NAPOLEON BUONAPARTE.

P.S.—The second Prince of Orange is just arrived in London. He is of the same age as my daughter, and I should not be much surprised that this marriage would take place soon, as Princess Charlotte would certainly not be under the necessity to leave her native country, he being not the successor, only the second son.

Telemachus shall meet me at Brunswick, and take the place of my old *saint*. I have been dreadful tormented by Whitbread and Brougham about my going abroad. *Mais bouche close !* Once more, *Addio, toute à vous.*

C. P.

The Princess of Wales to the same.

MA CHERE ———,

26 de Mars, 1815.

JE viens d'arriver à Gènes ce matin dans une maison délicieuse près de la mer. Un jardin divin. Lord et Lady Glenbervi dînent aujourd'hui chez moi ; ils sont mes meilleurs amis, mais je les trouve tous les deux changés. Pour la poli-

tique il faut que je sois bouche close. Car, hélas ! j'ai trop bien vu des choses pour me faire croire toute chose possible à l'égard de Murat et de sa Dame. Le bon Sicard a été obligé de se rendre en Angleterre pour quelques mois, ainsi toute la besogne des arrangemens de famille retombe sur moi. Lady de F—— est déjà à Londres ayant fini ses chasses* sur le continent. Monsieur Craven est avec sa mère. Sir W—— a la goutte. Voilà toute mon histoire.

&c. &c.

C. P.

The Princess of Wales to the same.

MY DEAR ——,

(No date.)

MANY thanks for all the trouble you have taken about houses. I hope I have at last found one to put myself, my guardian angels, and all my goods and chattels in. —— did come this morning prosing, and saying My Royal Highness ought not to leave Kensington Palace :—as if dere were protection and honor in these old walls ! No, no ; I must and will leave dis royal hospital for the decayed and poor royalties, and live in some

* In allusion to that lady having hunted with the court at Naples.

more cheerful situation, and one where my friends can come to me without paying de toll at the turn-pike-gate. Dey would like to have me always shut up in dis convent. Out of der mind out of der sight, my dear. But I will not submit.

I send for your edification a criticism that has lately reached me, and remain for ever

Your affectionate

C. P.

P.S.—I have made Joan copy out the vers.

THE COSTUME OF THE MINISTERS.

Having sent off the troops of bold Major Camac,
 With a swinging horse-tail at each valorous back,
 And such helmets, God bless us! as never deck'd any
 Male creature before, except Signor Giovanni.
 "Let's see," said the R—g—nt, like Titus perplex'd
 With the duties of empire, "whom shall I dress next?"
 He looks in the glass, but perfection is there—
 Wig, whiskers, and chin tufts all right to a hair!
 Not a single *ex-curl* on his forehead he traces,
 (For curls are like ministers, strange as the case is,
 The *falser* they are, the more firm in their places.)
 His coat he next views; but the coat who could doubt?
 For his Yarmouth's own Frenchified hand cut it out!
 Every pucker and seam were made matters of state,
 And a grand household council was held on each plait.
 In short, such a vein of perfection ran through him,
 His figure, *for once*, was a sinecure to him.

Then whom shall he dress? Shall he new rig his brother,
 Great C—mb—rl—nd's Duke, with some kickshaw or other,
 And kindly invent him more Christian-like shapes
 For his feather-bed neckcloths and pillory capes?
 Ah! no, here his ardour would meet such delays,
 For the Duke had been lately packed up in *new stays*—
 So complete for the winter, he saw very plain
 'Twould be dev'lish hard work to *unpack* him again.
 So what's to be done? *There's the ministers*, bless 'em,
 As he *made* the puppets, why should not he *dress* 'em?
 An excellent thought! Call the tailors; be nimble;
 While Y—rm——h shall give us, in spite of all quizzers,
 The last Paris cut with his true Gallic scissors.
 So saying he calls C—st—r—gh, and the rest
 Of his heaven-born statesmen to come and be drest;
 While Y—rm——h with snip-like and brisk expedition,
 Cuts up, all at once, a large Catholic petition
 In long tailors' measures, (the Prince crying "Well done!
 And first put in hand my Lord Chancellor E. L. D. O. N.")

The Princess of Wales to the same.

MY DEAR ———,

I AM very sorry to hear of your being ill.
 Pray send me word how you are by return of my
 messenger, as I shall be extremely anxious to
 hear you are better.

Only tink what de courtier Lord M—a did
 de oder night. When Lady Charlotte Lindsay
 go to Carlton House she forget to take her cre-

dentials with her. So when dat preux Chevalier ask for it, she say she have left it at home by mistake; yet Milord will not let her in, though he is *intime* wid her, and she have to return and fetch de card of invitation before Lord M——a will let her enter de presence of de Great Mogul! So much for de courtesy of dis polite gentleman; it does not reflect honour on de lessons he have received from his royal master.

Enough about nothing, my dear,

From your

C. P.

The Princess of Wales to the same.

DEAR ———,

PRAY do me the favor to accept and wear de accompanying gown, and when you are in de ball at Carlton House tink of me, and wish me well.

For ever your affectionate

C. P.

The above brief note is full of matter for reflection and comment. In the first place it is a proof of the Princess's generosity of feeling, as well as her liberality of ideas in pecuniary matters. She

always had pleasure in giving to those of her ladies whom she considered to be in want of her generosity. But the occasion on which the foregoing note was written was one in which she displayed great magnanimity of character and nobility of disposition. All Her Royal Highness's ladies had been invited to a fête by the Prince Regent, from which she was herself excluded: yet she took that opportunity to give them a proof of her regard, by presenting them all with very handsome dresses. Such traits of character should be set forth, and receive the public homage due to their merit.

The Princess of Wales to the same.

MY DEAR —,

WHAT shall I say—dat I am in low spirits? It will only vex your kind heart to hear of my being unhappy. Yet, hélas! it is the only news I can offer for your amusement. But it is so long since I have had the pleasure of seeing you, or hearing anything about you, dat I must trouble you with a few lines, to ask you to let me have de satisfaction of hearing of your welfare; and also let you know that such a person as I still exist on de face of der terrestrial globe.

I have lived very quiet since I saw you last, and no one has intruded demselves upon my solitude ; unless I do show dem de knife and fork no company has come to Kensington or Blackheath, and neither my purse nor my spirits can always afford to hang out de offer of “ An ordinary.”

I have seen my daughter once ; she do not look well, and I tink dey not love her very much, poor soul, but I no say anything to make her grumble ; it is best she should be satisfied with what is. She sees little of the Sultan, and he do not take the way to win her heart. Mais ça lui est bien égal à ce qui paroît ; however, he may repent his conduct some day.

I heard of Lady —— at a ball de oder night, dressed in a curious costume. Her beauty is quite flétrie comme une rose passé ; but she has all de perfume dat flower has when it is dead ; she is très aimable et bonne, but between you and I and dis sheet of paper, voilà tout, she will never set fire to de Thames.

Next month Lady C. Lindsay will take de charge of my soul and body, which she always do well, and she is very witty, and amuses me.

I send you some verses Sidney Smith wrote on Lady ——’s parasol ; pray ornament your scrap-

book with the productions of dis worthy man,
and believe me for ever to remain,

Your affectionate,

C. P.

To Lady ——'s Parasol,—by S. S.

Detested shade ! thou that dost oft beguile
My watchful eyes of many a winning smile,
Why dost thou spread thy silken arch above
Her dazzling face, and dim the light of love ?
Why hide the wandering sun-beams from her eyes ?
No gem so bright the wand'ring sun-beam spies.
Why stop the breezes from their fleeting bliss ?
No lips so sweet the fleeting breezes kiss.
'Twere something worth, if thy soft gloom could stay
The gazing soul, and cloud the inward day—
Could veil that form that thrills my inward breast,
And give me days of ease, and nights of rest.

From the Princess of Wales to the same.

MY DEAR ——.

I DID much regret your absence from my little party last night, for we were all very merry. The Gell, Berry, Sidney Smith, Lewis, Lady Oxford (*De Miscellany Harleyn*, as all de world does call her now), and Milord Byron, did make it very pleasant; and we all laugh till we cry. Lewis did play de part of Cupidon, which

amuse us, as you will suppose. He is grown so embonpoint, he is more droll than ever in dat character; but he tink himself charming, and look so happy when he make *les yeux doux* to the pretty ladies, dat it is cruel to tell him, "You are in de paradise of de fools," so me let him sigh on to My Lady Oxford, which do torment Lord Byron, who wanted to talk wid her, and never could contrive it.

Lady Anne is en petite santé just now; she is truly interesting; yet, as your song says, "Nobody's coming to marry her," nor I fear never will; so I and Joan shall live and die together, like two turtle-doves, or rather like dem two foolish women, Lady Eleanor Butler and Mlle. Ponsonby, who must be mad, I should tink, to choose to leave the world, and set up in a hermitage in Wales,—mais chacun a son goût,—it would not be mine. My dear ——, I do dread being married to a lady friend. Men are tyrants, mais de women—heaven help us! dey are vrais Neros over those they rule. No, no,—give me my sweet Prince, rather than a female governess.

We are all so well, and in such good spirits, that we shall be at Worthing on Thursday at five o'clock, in the year of our Lord 1814, on the 26th of May.

There are wonderful and astonishing reports in the great metropolis ; that the Queen has written a letter to the Princess of Wales, by the instigation of the Prince Regent, that the Princess is not to appear at the drawing-room;—and that the Princess of Wales has written a very spirited answer to the Queen, assuring her that her determination was to go, for which reason nobody believes that there will be any drawing-room ; but we will talk of it at our meeting.

So for the present I will only add dat I am

Your sincerely affectionate

C. P.

The Princess of Wales to the same.

Como, Villa D'Este, Friday.

THANK you, *ma chère*, for your kind letter, which I am afraid to answer, for I have so little to tell you ; living here, as I do, wid my faithful little society, who are all composed of persons dat do not meddle wid de grand *monde*, which suits me better than if they did, but which of course prevents my having much wherewith to entertain oders. I should be happy to see you in my little nutshell, which is pretty and comfortable, and my

gardens are charmant. I lead quite a rural life, and work in de garden myself, which do my body and mind both good. I am pretty well in health. Au reste, toujours de même.

I heard from my daughter de oder day. She expect to be confined in November. She sent me some vers, de production of Lady ——'s genius for de muse, on the subject of dat interesting Prince, her husband. Perhaps it may amuse you to see what a courtier Lady —— is become. She never write to me now; she has gone wid de crowd, and turned her back upon de setting sun to worship the rising planet; mais, she mistakes if she tink Charlotte will like her the better for not noticing de Princess of Wales.

Pray give my compliments to Lady W——d, if she is at Rome. She is always polite to me.

And now, having no amusement to offer you, I will only say that I am toujours your sincere friend,

C. P.

*On being desired by Princess Charlotte to write some lines
on the Portrait of her Husband.*

IMPROMPTU.

The thoughtful brow, the warrior mien,
The look that speaks a soul serene ;

The forehead's fine capacious bound,
With intellectual beauty crowned ;
The pensiveness which seems to say
That deep-felt bliss is never gay :
Such is this image. May it be
For e'er as now, beloved by thee !
United may ye ever live
With all of joy that earth can give—
In soul, in thought, in spirit one ;
And when this earthly race is run,
Translated to a higher sphere,
Improve the bliss you tasted here.

*Letter from Queen Caroline to the same, in reply
to one addressed to her Majesty, congratulating
her on the glorious termination of her trial.*

I assure you, my dear ——, no one's congratulations have been more welcome to me than yours. I do indeed feel thankful at having put my enemies to confusion, and received the justice my conduct and character deserved. Mais hélas, it comes too late, dear ——. Her who would have rejoiced with me at her mother's triumph is lost to me ; but she is in a much better world than de present, and we shall meet soon I trust, for to tell you de truth I cannot expect much comfort nowhere so long as I shall live. No one, in fact,

care for me ; and this business has been more cared for as a political affair, dan as de cause of a poor forlorn woman. Mais n'importe ! I ought to be grateful ; and I reflect on dese proceedings wid astonishment—car ils sont vraiment merveilleux. 'That I should have been saved out of the Philistines' hands is truly a miracle, considering de power of my enemies and deir chiefs, for noting was left undone dat could be done to destroy my character for evermore. I could tell you something—oh ! mein Gott ! some day I will—but I cannot write dem. I feel very unwell, fatigued, and ébayé ; I wonder my head is not quite bewildered wid all I have suffered—and it is not over yet wid me. Dat cruel personage will never let me have peace so long as I stay in dis country : his rancune is boundless against me.

I was sure you woud rejoice at my glory, dear —— ; no one has been more true to me dan yourself at all times, and you have not wasted your interest on an ingrate I assure you.

Poor Joan of Arc has really proved herself true to de name I used to give her pour me moquer d'elle. She has staid wid me through it all, and God he knows dat was no small trial. Poor soul ! I hope he will reward her for her courage.

Many people call on me now who never did

before. The —— is one of those who has made me l'amende honorable. I will not quarrel with their respect, though it is shown me rather late in de day, and when they cannot well help it.

I could prose for an hour to you, dear ——, but will spare your patience, and my own eyes and head, which are both aching.

So adieu, and believe me

Truly and affectionately yours,

CAROLINE.

LETTERS

FROM THE

PRINCESS CHARLOTTE.



LETTERS.

*Extract from a Letter of Princess Charlotte,
dated Weymouth, 19th August, 1815.*

I CANNOT close this letter without returning my best acknowledgments for your condolence with, and inquiries after me, in consequence of the fall of my glorious (as well as much-loved) uncle. I bore it as, I trust, a Christian ought, bowing to the will of the all-wise Being; but it was a grievous circumstance—a dreadful, an irremediable loss to me, for the great possess few real friends. In him I had a warm and constant one, allied, too, by the closest ties of blood. I loved him with the fondest affection, and am confident he returned the sentiment. His death was so glorious—so completely what he always desired for himself—that if it was decreed he should so early in life quit this world, he could not close his career more gloriously or more worthy of a hero, as he was, and of that father and that blood he descended from.

Pardon me if I seem enthusiastic in my expressions; but I confess this is a topic which warms

every feeling of my heart and mind. You knew him [a word illegible] impartially if I say too much in his favour. My health I do not think has suffered from this shock; but I have not been really well for some time past.

[An illegible line.]

I was much better for so doing last year, and trust I may derive equal benefit this; but I am still complaining, though I am not the least fanciful about my health; that is a weakness I do not allow myself to indulge in, though there are some which cannot be avoided by the wisest. I less regret than I otherwise should do your remaining abroad, for two reasons: the first is [illegible]; secondly, there is at present so little chance, I may say none indeed, of our meeting, that it would only be tantalizing. Time, which is the sweet healer of all sorrows, has mitigated and softened down my previous afflictions and distresses to a gentle mild melancholy and resignation; but the recollection of them cannot be effaced. What was at first (as you sensibly remark) the aggravation of my sorrow is now my consolation.

I trust my mother continues well, and that she has not been very much shocked by the death of her brother. I hope she has got a letter. *I was permitted to write to her* on the sad event, &c.

(Signed) CHARLOTTE.

The above letter does great credit to the head and heart of the royal writer. Who would not have expected that such warm affections, such natural and pious reflections, must have ripened into a great and good character, had this young Princess lived to realize those expectations? but it pleased God to take her away, it may be, from the ills to come.

*Another from Her Royal Highness to the same,
dated Warwick House.*

MY dear Miss Mercer brought me word of your return to —, dear —, and I write to ask you to be so kind as to do me the favour of coming to see me any day this week, from one till five, when you will be sure to find me at home in my own sitting-room. I wish very much to have the pleasure of seeing you again, and I also wish you to look at and give me your opinion of a portrait Hayter has been painting of me. It is reckoned like; but I do not feel flattered by it. Do not think me vain, and suppose I expect to be represented as a perfect beauty, because I am a Princess; but the fault I find with this picture is, that there is no *sentiment* in the expression,—it is quite a piece of still life, and rather cross-looking. I dare say I did look tired; for oh! it is very tire-

some to sit for one's portrait. However, I ought to make allowances for the artist if he has failed, for I know I was a very bad sitter.

So pretty B. B—— is married to Lord W. B——. I hope she will be happy, and I hear much good said of her husband. I could have wished her a richer one; but it is frequently not the best matches that turn out the happiest. Talking of matches, I hear I am to be married to the Prince of Orange; it is more than I know myself. If you see my mother, please to tell her so, with my love. Have the goodness to send me word what day you can call on me, and believe me

Yours, most truly,

(Signed) CHARLOTTE.

The portrait Her Royal Highness the Princess Charlotte mentions in the above letter, is certainly the most faithful likeness ever taken of her; but the Princess was not a very good judge of the fine arts, nor indeed of the merit of a portrait as such, to judge by the specimens which she had hanging up in her apartments, and which she admired. I remember once observing a picture which I thought was intended to represent the Duke of D——, and upon my asking Miss K—— whose portrait it was, that lady replied, with courtier-like prudence, that it was the picture of

the Pretender. There was a comical aptness in the expression she made use of, to the real person whom, I believe, the picture represented, at which I could scarcely restrain smiling. Perhaps it was the portrait of a Pretender in more senses than one.

Extract from another Letter from Her Royal Highness to the same.

THANK you, dear —, for having permitted me to peruse my mother's letter to you, though, indeed, its contents have made me feel very uncomfortable. I wish with all my heart things could be altered, or, at least, that she could be persuaded to feel more at peace, and, above all, more confidence in those who really have her interests at heart. If I could see you I would *tell* you *why* I do not write to her; but I do not think it quite prudent to write all I feel upon this, to me, very painful circumstance.

I trust, Dr. — will remain in the Princess's service, and am also led to hope that Lady C. C—— may join my mother again. I should feel much relieved by knowing that she had some English attendants with her in a foreign country. I *think* some of the others might have remained with her; but I am told they were all compelled,

from circumstances in their own private affairs, to return to England. I think she would do well to secure Miss M—— as a temporary attendant. She is trustworthy, I believe ; but you know my mother is not easily pleased.

I cannot help thinking it was unlucky she ever left England ; yet I can fully enter into the motives she had for so doing, or rather the *feelings* which prompted her to seek change of scene.

I have said too much on this subject, dear —— ; pray forgive me for having prosed so long. Thank you for your inquiries after my health. I am not so well as I ought to be, for indeed I have *everything* to make me both perfectly well and perfectly happy, and these lesser evils sink before my greater blessings, and I hope to grow stronger as the warm weather advances. The Prince desires me to say *something* kind from him to you ; what shall that something be ? I am no very ready scholar, so I will leave it to you to compose a pretty speech for him. All I can assure you of, and that with great sincerity, is, that my *cara sposo* and myself are very truly yours,

(Signed) C P. S. C.

This letter is a pleasing proof of Princess Charlotte's affection for her mother, and affords ample grounds for believing that, had they

mutually been spared, each would have derived comfort and protection from the other. In a very remarkable letter (though a brief one) given in the body of the Diary, Princess Charlotte laments her *inability* at that time to serve her mother, and there can be little doubt that, had she ever obtained the power to shield and succour the Princess of Wales, the will would not have been wanting. From all I ever heard or saw of Princess Charlotte's character, I can affirm that that which she proposed to do, she would have surmounted a world of difficulties to have performed; and I am certain that the passive conduct she displayed towards her mother only proceeded from a feeling of inability to take any useful or effective steps in her cause. There was both wisdom and propriety in the Princess's conduct during the whole of that most painful epoch, when she was placed in such a situation as not to be able to defend one of her parents, without blaming or appearing to reprobate the other. It is well known to several persons, however, what were Her Royal Highness's real feelings on the subject, and to which individual her heart inclined; there is no doubt she leant with fond partiality towards her mother, and that the chief reason of her having appeared so passive for many years, was that she had only

waited a fit opportunity for supporting the Princess of Wales, and advocating her cause judiciously.

From the same to the same.

Dated Friday, Claremont.

MY DEAR —,

HAVING so very lately troubled you with a letter, I will not be guilty of indiscretion in plaguing you with another long one so soon. This is only a few lines, to hope you will be able to do us the favour and pleasure of coming to us next Thursday, and, should you not find it *too dull*, perhaps you would prolong your stay till Saturday. Our dinner hour being seven o'clock, and our rule that of everybody's following their own habits as to hours, and doing that which is most agreeable and comfortable to themselves, in order to make them feel as much at home as possible, it is not *à façon de parler* to say that this is Liberty Hall, and that we are only too happy to dispense with form and ceremony.

I heard from my mother a few days ago; she had reached Geneva, and was much pleased with her reception there. I hope she will derive much benefit from her tour, *mais je ne sçais*; at all events, change of air must do her health good. It would require more than novelty of place and

society, I fear, to do her spirits service. However, I hope time and Providence may yet have much happiness in store for her.

Adieu, my dear —, and believe me yours,
most sincerely and affectionately,

(Signed) C. P. S. C.

The great simplicity and unaffected style of the foregoing letters render them exceedingly interesting, as being the production of a royal personage. And they are a true index of the Princess's mind, which was, like them, true, natural, and kind. But Her Royal Highness mistook, when she promised her correspondent should find no form or ceremony at Claremont, for it was far otherwise, whatever the Princess might have wished on that point. There was another person, whose will was paramount to hers, and who considered, and perhaps with justice, that it was not advisable to dispense with all observance of etiquette, and the circle was by no means without form and stiffness. It was remarked by persons who were present, that the Prince never quitted the Princess for a single moment when she was in company, and Her Royal Highness seldom, if ever, saw anybody alone after her marriage; her husband was always present, and the chief favourite of the Princess Charlotte, Miss M. E——l,

who was accustomed formerly to go straight to Her Royal Highness's private apartment, was always subsequently shown into the public reception rooms, and made to await there the announcement that *Their* Royal Highnesses were ready to receive her.

It was a singular fact, that the heiress apparent to the throne was not permitted to have an establishment in any degree suited to her rank, and that the Princess Charlotte had no regular attendants. Certainly, every means were taken to keep her in subjection, and there can be no doubt that the "rising sun" was an eye-sore to the Regent, more especially as it was the daughter of the Princess of Wales who was to be his successor. And both Princess Charlotte and her husband evinced much discretion and forbearance, in the dignified manner in which they avoided causing any tumult in the country, by attempting to enforce their rights, or asking for the dignities and privileges to which they had a claim.

ADDITIONAL LETTERS

FROM

SIR WILLIAM GELL, M. G. LEWIS,
SISMONDI, &c.

LETTERS.

Letter from M. G. Lewis.

Edinburgh, February 14th.

DEAR —.

I RECEIVED your letter at Inverary Castle, where I was too much occupied to write to any person, with the exception of my mother. I am now again upon the wing, and only intend to sojourn for a day or two in this northern capital, which is at present quite deserted, all the choice spirits having quitted it to seek green groves and rural sights. We had a very pleasant party at Inverary. Besides the family there were Tom Sheridan and pretty Mrs. G—— and C——d, who were amusing us idlers with their tender glances at each other. Tom was in great force, and wrote verses without end. Knowing that you are curious in these matters, I transmit to you his “last” upon Lady ——, which, I think, will please you. This must be a very short epistle, as I am charged with commissions to execute for Lady —— and Mrs. —— and Miss ——. I am in great request among the ladies, I beg to assure you, and also that I am ever faithfully yours,

M. G. LEWIS.

P.S. I send you the verses written in Tom’s

own hand, so you may give the autograph copy, if it so please you, to your friend ——, who is collecting such matters.

T. Sheridan to Lady ——.

Mark'd you not how that morn, when all around
The drifting snow had blanch'd the shivering ground ;
When zephyr's gentle call great nature heard,
How quick each struggling plant and shrub she rear'd ;
Woke the mute grove, reviv'd the drooping flocks,
And shook the tempest from her verdant locks ?

So when sad thoughts of joy for ever flown,
Or self-reproach for follies still my own,
Drives o'er my shrinking heart ; and bitter truth
Chills the wild, thoughtless spirit of my youth ;
Thy magic skill, with music's thrilling charm,
Dispels the storm ; my trembling senses warm ;
Bright hopes like springing flow'rets deck my way,
My breast is sunshine, and the world again runs gay.

Letter from M. G. Lewis, Esq.

MY DEAR ——,

I SHOULD have answered your kind letter before now, but that I have been so gay I have not had a moment to spare to absent friends. There's an honest confession for you ! Well, I will not waste my paper in composing appropriate excuses, but endeavour to be as amusing as I can. In the first place I must tell you that I have lived a great

deal at Kensington, and that I am happy to say the Princess looks well, and appears in good spirits. People, of course, never talk of anything but Her Royal Highness's letter, and I fancy for all she will make of it she might as well have let it alone. Questionless she has been hardly used; but for all that, she does wrong to make herself the tool of a party, if it is by the Opposition she has been instigated to this measure. As for the letter itself, the first impression it gave me was its being too long. I would have imagined she must have composed it herself, though it may have been corrected by others; because it is so diffuse that there is no mistaking it for a woman's writing. Amplification always diminishes interest and compassion, and if it had been condensed into one-fourth of its present length it would have made a greater effect on the public mind. I suppose it was to please Princess Charlotte that she wants her to be brought into public; otherwise she is young enough; besides, her wishes would rather retard than accelerate the event. The newspapers say the Princess of Wales has been communicative with Sir F. B——; which is very unwise; and also, they say, she has been dining twice with Lady Oxford. Now she ought in prudence to choose more decent company than the latter. Is it really true Her Royal High-

ness dined twice with Lady O.? You ask me what the feeling is towards the Princess in Scotland. I can answer, decidedly favourable. It appeared to me when I was at Edinburgh that she had a strong party in her favour there, and that, generally speaking, all Scotch and virtuous hair stands an end when they hear her abused; but I fear me, if she associates with gay ladies, the good dames of Scotia will shake their heads, and not continue so partial to Her Royal Highness.

London is mad with gaiety. There are half a dozen parties to go to, at least, every night. There are a host of new beauties come forth to turn all our heads; but, for my part, I admire some of the older stagers infinitely more than the rosebuds. The sweetest, to my fancy, is Miss Rawdon, and she has wit, too, and sprightly humour. I wonder what coronet she will get to put upon her pretty head.

Lady Oxford's long fair hair is the most beautiful I ever beheld; she is like one of Guido's fair Magdalens—that is to say, in appearance: as to the inside, I don't believe there's much penitence there. But stop. I am growing ill-natured, which I know you can't bear, so I will conclude with giving you a receipt for making an accomplished woman! which I beg you to deliver to

—, and ask him if, out of such ingredients, he could not make up a wife to suit his lordship's fastidious taste.

To form a fair one all complete,
 Regard the following receipt :—
 Take noble Devon's lovely face ;
 Take Marlborough's dignity and grace ;
 A grain of Lady Bridget's wit ;*
 The shape and elegance of Pitt ;†
 From Smyth take ev'ry polish'd art
 That youth and genius can impart ;
 From Cath'rine ‡ take th' historic page ;
 From Pool what love will most assuage ;
 From Towshend's eye take Cupid's dart,
 Make Lothian fix it in the heart.
 What well will ev'ry care beguile
 Must be collected from Carlisle ;
 From Pembroke's conduct lessons take
 To mould and mend a noble rake ;
 Dawkins Hymen's torch shall lend ;
 From Langhorne learn to be a friend.
 Minerva's talents take from Guise ;
 Take brilliancy from Clayton's eyes ;
 A little dash of Fitzroy's§ spirit,
 Craven's wish and Milford's merit ;
 Take Cranbourne's|| lively wit and sense,
 With fair Louisa's¶ innocence.
 Let Acheson the mind improve,
 And Joddrel fan the flame of love.

* Lady Bridget Tollemache.

† Lady Rivers.

‡ Mrs. Macaulay.

§ Lady Southampton.

|| Lady Salisbury.

¶ Lady Shelburne.

Let Bulkley lend the wedding chain ;
 Ask Milner how a heart to gain.
 From Baily learn a heart to keep,
 And honey take from Beauchamp's lip.
 Take softness from Carmarthen's* dame,
 And Philps to crown the lover's fame.
 Let Crespigny by magic powers
 Fill up and smooth domestic hours.
 Granby shall loves and graces spare,
 And Hobart banish every care.
 Let Vaughan conduct the marriage reins,
 And Meynell ease a lover's pains.
 Taste you will find in Derby's school ;
 Let Bampffield teach you how to rule ;
 And Thanet all that gladdens life,
 In friend, in mistress, or in wife.

They are too long by half ; but out of the quantity of ingredients surely —— can make up a wife for himself.

Ever yours,

M. G. LEWIS.

From the same.

DEAR ——.

I HAVE no great pleasure in writing in ladies' albums, but to please you, *anything* I can do I always will ;—so to please your friend, for

* Lady Conyers.

your sake, I send you the last productions of my muse. Poor thing, she's sadly out of order, and nearly worn out, as you will see by the specimens I send you herein enclosed ; but it is the best I have to offer your friend, so she must either insert these lines into her album, or put them into the fire, which latter, I truly think, is all they deserve. The subject ought to have inspired me, but I am grown very stupid—as if I had ever been bright !—what a conceited creature *the monk* is, you will exclaim—so no more about self.

I hear it rumoured that Miss F——r doth write novels, or is about writing one ; I wish she would let such idle nonsense alone, for, however great a respect I may entertain for her talents (which I do), I tremble lest she should fail in this book-making ; and as a rule, I have an aversion, a pity and contempt, for all female scribblers. The needle, not the pen, is the instrument they should handle, and the only one they ever use dexterously. I must except, however, their love-letters, which are sometimes full of pleasing conceits ; but this is the only subject they should ever attempt to write about. Madame De Staël even I will not except from this general rule ; she has done a plaguy deal of mischief, and no good, by meddling in literary matters, and I wish to heaven she would renounce pen, ink, and paper for evermore.

Indeed, I feel afraid she may get herself into some scrape, from which she will perhaps not save her head, if she does not take care. In a word, to make short of a long story, I hate a blue ; give me a rose any day in preference, that is to say, a pretty woman to a learned one. What has made you inflict this long harangue upon me ? you will exclaim, and I must beg your pardon for so doing ; but the fact is, I am full of the subject, being at the present moment much enraged at Lady ——, for having come out in the shape of a novel ; and now, hearing that Miss F—— is about to follow her bad example, I write in great perturbation of mind, and cannot think or speak of anything else.

Poor Princess A——, it is said, confessed her marriage to Colonel F——y before she died, and furthermore, that he treated her very cavalierly ; the more the shame, for she was a sweet creature, so amiable and really pretty at one time.

Am I rightly informed, that the Princess of Wales has suddenly taken a great fancy for music, and certain professors thereof ? I hope not. Do tell Lady —— to give Her Royal Highness some good advice, though I know she never will ; and perhaps she is right. But, if I were in her situation, I should feel too much interested to be able to withstand saving and serving a person I was attached to, even though I might risk the loss of

a little of the royal favour. I feel certain I should not know how to be a courtier, yet I think I might be useful at a court ; though I would not for any sum be Master of the Horse, Chamberlain, or candle-snuffer to any royal person whatsoever. It is a great pity if things go wrong at Kensington ; and if they once are ill arranged, it will be almost impossible to remedy the evil, or avert painful, nay, awful consequences. But I do not wish to be a prophet of evil, and all that I say proceeds from sincere regard for Her Royal Highness, whom I consider very ill treated.

I am summoned to Holland House to dinner, so must say adieu, and remain ever yours,

M. G. LEWIS.

Lines addressed to the Lady Sarah Bayly, by Mr. Lewis, on her desiring him to write some verses on her.

Dated Ramsbury Park, January 3, 18 .

Come, lute, let me wreathe thee with roses,

Silver soft be the tune of each string,

For Sarah the subject proposes,

And she's the sweet subject I sing.

What sound can I draw from my lyre,

What theme can I pour in her ear,

Not too cold for her charms to inspire,

Nor too warm for her virtue to hear ?

Not praise,—for its strength might offend her,—

Though the strongest would be but her due ;

Not love,—for she'd think it too tender,—

Not less, for it would not be true.

But, hark ! from the chamber adjoining,
 The harp of Diana I hear ;*
 Thanks, Dian, my scruples designing,
 I'm bold now I know you so near.

Ah ! when Cupid and Phœbus are turning
 Their influence into a curse ;
 When my bosom with passion is burning,
 And my brain is exalted by verse ;

Lest the goddess of beauty should chide me,
 It's well for the half-witted elf
 That nought but a door should divide me
 From the goddess of chastity's self.

*Lines by Mr. M. G. Lewis on Lady Sarah Bayly
 having talked to him whilst playing at Chess with
 him, and having made him lose his Queen by so doing.*

My ideas to confuse
 Your tongue wherefore use ?
 Your eyes quite sufficient had been.
 King George in my place,
 While he gazed on your face,
 Like *me*, had forgotten his Queen.

From the same.

Dated Holland House, October 22, .

MY DEAR ———,

I CONFESS that I am sorry for the abandonment of your Lisbon plan, since I think it

* Miss Bayly.

would have been beneficial to your health and spirits as far as change of scene, climate, and objects would have gone; but I believe, in every other respect, you would have found the present to be by no means a fit time for visiting Portugal with comfort. I have lately seen several officers who are just returned from that kingdom, and represent its state as being truly deplorable. The whole country is laid waste; every thing is exorbitantly dear; the natives are too much occupied by their own losses and alarms to show attention to strangers; the army consumes all the provisions, and Lisbon is represented as being almost on the brink of a famine. When to all this we add Portugal's being the seat of war, and the heavy loss in the exchange of money, I think you will allow that for the present, at least, your plan of visiting Lisbon is full as well postponed, like the second part of Dr. Drowsey's sermon, "till a more convenient opportunity."

I dined at Kensington Palace on Tuesday. Nobody was there, except Dr. John Moore. I was sorry to find the Princess evidently in very low spirits. She told me, that she was to go to Blackheath as Sunday last—that she should remain there seven months, and (if I understood her right) that it was Her Royal Highness's intention to see nobody there, except for a short morning

visit. Can you account for this long retreat of hers? It is to me quite inexplicable. Lady Glenbervie was in waiting, and as agreeable as she always is ; that is saying everything in her praise. She spoke a great deal to me of our mutual friend Lady ——, and the interest which she takes in her welfare ; above all, she charged me to impress upon Lady ——'s mind how much better it would be for her to pass the winter at Brighton, than at —— . Lady Glenbervie observed, that houses are not more expensive at the former place, than at the latter, while at — Lady — would be left quite in solitude, and at Brighton she would have an agreeable society, of which she might take as little or as much as she chose : Lady Glenbervie, moreover, declared herself ready to do everything in her power to make the place comfortable to our friend, and said that Lord G—— would take any trouble off her hands which might require *masculine* interference ; observing (I should think very truly), that it was always very uncomfortable and inconvenient for a woman to reside at a place where she has no male protector to take her part if it should be necessary to do so. By the by, she said incidentally, “ I assure you I am quite anxious for Lady —— coming to reside at Brighton ; which is certainly very generous in me, for Lord Glenbervie admires her beyond any woman in

the world." I set this down as a joke, but people have since assured me that she meant it quite seriously, for that she is really and truly extremely jealous of her caro sposo. Have you ever had any suspicion of this kind?—But to return to Brighton and Lady Glenbervie. I replied to all she said (in which I think there was a great deal of reason) by saying Yes; but if the Regent goes there, it would be extremely unpleasant for Lady ——, as I have every reason to believe he would take no notice of her; for, notwithstanding that he pretended at first to take the intelligence of her having accepted the place of lady in waiting to the Princess of Wales with a good grace, I was assured he by no means liked the circumstance of so dignified and advantageous a person being about the Princess; and I have heard suspicions that he influenced Lady Sheffield to quit Her Royal Highness's service; but of this last circumstance I am not so well informed, and think it rather a far-fetched and improbable act of mischief. But I dare say the Regent did not feel pleased at Lady —— filling the vacant situation, and I should be sorry she went to a place where she would be under his eye, and not noticed as she deserves to be. I must say, I think it is a most illiberal trait in him not to pay that attention due to the rank of the Princess's ladies, without reference to their being in her ser-

vice. But such is not his idea of propriety, and for this reason I object to Lady —— going to Brighton. I have always considered it a noble contrast in the Princess's character, the liberal manner in which she always forgives her acquaintances and friends for paying court to "the Great Mahomet," as she calls him; and I have particularly admired the total absence of all prejudice which she displays, by frequently being even partial to many of the Regent's cronies. Certainly, she has not the justice done her that is due to her merits. But who has, my dear ——, in this world?

I have lately been to my sister's new residence, which I approve of very much; the house is thoroughly comfortable, and the park is really beautiful; it formed part of Enfield Chase, is still quite wild, in the forest style, and contains some of the finest trees I ever beheld. I think you will be pleased with the place, and flatter myself that, when you return to this part of the world, you will manage to pass some days there. Maria and Lushington will, I am certain, be most happy to receive you. From my sister's I went to Lord Melbourne's, and from thence to Oatlands, where I found the royal party well, and gracious to me, as they always are. By the way, the Duchess is very kind in her feelings about the Princess of

Wales, but *hélas ! à quoi bon ?* in the world's opinion—though in my humble estimation, she is very good-hearted person, and has many virtues that others more esteemed do not possess.

I am now come to make a short stay at Holland House, where I find all going on *à l'ordinaire*.—I was sorry to learn that Lady — has not profited by Lady Mary Cook's death, and that she has sent *her coals to Newcastle*, by leaving her riches to the Duchess of Buccleugh. I could, on hearing this intelligence, have sent Lady Mary to a place not proper to mention to “ears polite.” I always thought her a detestable piece of buckram and pride, and am now quite convinced I was right.

I hear Clanronald has made his proposals and been accepted. He has been rather long of making them, but the Princess says this was right, for that it would not have been proper in him to have done so before, and that it would have been unfeeling in him to have proposed so soon after Mrs. G——'s death. I hope this is the proper reason, but I confess I do not understand it. While she was alive, his attachment to her might have made him waver as to marrying; but really, I cannot see, as things stand at present, how Mrs. G—— can be any obstacle, or where there is any delicacy in the case.

Lord H——n is wooing Lady E——h B——m.

I do not envy him the lady, she is so full of conceits, and so busy at work for a great *partie*. The Lord help us ! what a deal of trouble she takes. Somehow, I do not think she will win this great prize. Lord H—— may play with her as a cat does with a mouse, and let her ladyship go after all, which is often the fashion of these great men. Besides, there are more things than are dreamt of in our philosophy, and you know the story of that house, which, *if so* be it is true, would preclude any alliance.

I have no more to say at present, dear ——.
Indeed, I dare say you will think I have said too much by half, so here I stop, wishing you all possible felicity.

I remain, ever most truly yours,

M. G. LEWIS.

From the same.

London, Nov. 8th, 4 in the Morning.

MY DEAR ——,

I HAVE been on the point of writing to you for many months, but still delayed it, in the daily expectation of telling you positively, what I can now tell you very positively indeed—when I was to set out for Jamaica. My chaise is at the door, my baggage is on board, and in a few hours I shall

have quitted England. Accept, therefore, my parting assurances of unimpaired friendship for yourself and —— in the same breath. Be assured that time and distance have no effect upon my affections, and that as long as I am in existence you and yours will ever have, at least, one sincere friend in the world. God Almighty for ever bless you ! and do not forget your sincerely attached

M. G. LEWIS.

P.S. Make my parting respects to the Princess of Wales when you see her, or write to her, and tell her that I have never forgotten the kindness with which she honoured me. If I do not find her in England on my return, I trust that in Italy I shall be more fortunate, and in whatever part of it she may be, I shall not fail to pay my respects to her. My brother-in-law, Sir Henry Lushington, when he passed near Milan, inquired whether Her Royal Highness was at the Lago di Como, and if she had been there he would have gone over there purposely to inquire whether she had any commands for England. I hope Her Royal Highness will act prudently, and I also sincerely hope and pray all her enemies may be confounded. The pleasant evenings I have spent at Kensington, Her Royal Highness's hospitality, and the delightful assemblage of persons she had

the good taste to congregate around her, will ever form the most agreeable reminiscences in my life.

Again farewell, and all happiness attend you.

Letter from Sir W. Gell.

MY DEAR ——,

I OUGHT to make you many apologies for not having written long ago in answer to your last very charming letter ; but I won't do so, and I'll tell you why. It is a bore to invent excuses, and a bore to read them. So now for it. If you please, I will dash at once into the most interesting topics I wish to discourse with you upon.

In reply to your kind inquiry about my health, I am happy to be able to tell you I never was more flourishing. Enough on that score. You ask me for news of the Princess. Her Royal Highness appears gay and well in health. I have dined frequently lately at Kensington, and the society has been most agreeable and "select," as the papers say. But when I tell you these parties were made up of the Lindsay, and *the* Berry, par excellence of all Berries in the world ; Lady Oxford, who is lovely indeed to look upon ; my Lord Byron ; sometimes Sidney Smith, from whom issues perpetual and dazzling sparks of the most brilliant wit ; the grave Lord Henry ;

and, though last not least, your humble servant; you can believe these parties must be super-excellent, reflecting on the superior qualities of each individual who has composed them. It is wrong in me to have omitted our royal hostess herself; for to "*us*" much of the gaiety and spirit of these entertainments is due. "*We*" are most irresistibly good-natured and droll, in despite of ourselves.

Oh the English! Oh the English! it is perfect. "Fie, fie, Mr. Gell, *dat* is a great shame, 'pon honour. You see *vat* it is to make one man one's friend who laugh at me when I do turn my back."

"I do hate Lord Henry, my dear ——; to *tell you God's truth*, I cannot bear dat man." (Courtier)
—"I agree with your Royal Highness." (*Aside*)
"The Lord forgive you for *leeing*, for *leeing*," &c.

To return to the Kensington parties,—joking apart, they are the pleasantest arranged meetings in London. They only want one more ingredient to render them a non pareil sans pareil mixture—that is *you*. And we must have you. The Princess promises to lay her commands upon you, and to summon you within reach of her royal cry. By the way, Lewis also is often at Kensington. He is desperately in love, comme à l'ordinaire, with Lady S——h B——y. It is rare fun to see him looking sentimental, as you well know. C. S——e

is going about making his observations on the world and his wife. He is a very sly gentleman, but can be pleasant when he chooses, and has not got the eye ache, or tooth ache, or some other ache ; which happens but seldom, for he is always coddling himself. He is a great pet at D—— house.

The Princess is very busy trying to make up a marriage for Joan of Arc with some one ; any one *would* do. “Oh ! mein Gott, she has de eyes of Argus, and do pry into my most secret thoughts ; ’pon honour, I wonder sometimes how she guess what I tink. ’Tis a great plague to have dis dragonne de Virtue always attending me partout, partout. I must find her a husband to deliver me of her. Mais qui voudrois l’entreprendre ?” And then Her Royal Highness looks very significantly at me, as if she thought I should have the courage necessary to conquering this “*Amazon*.” I leave that boast to a more fortunate, or unfortunate, man. Meanwhile the lady in question, it would seem to me, makes les yeux doux to Lord B——.

Now for some scandal, say you. I hasten to obey, and readily open my knapsack, but, alas ! it is scantily replenished.

No. 1.—*An ill-natured Story.*

A gentleman passing along Piccadilly saw a crowd of people at Sir W. Hamilton’s door, where

they were putting the coffin into the hearse ; but seeing everybody looking up at the window, he looked also, and there was to be seen Lady H——n in all the *wildness of her grief*. Some said her attitudes were fine ; others that they were affected ; others that they were natural. At last, as the gentleman was leaving this motley group, some of whom were crying and others laughing, he heard a child go up to its mamma, and say, “ Ma, mamma, don’t cry, pray don’t cry, for they say as how it’s all *sham*. ”

No. 2.—*Another of the same sort.*

A gentleman went to call upon Lady H——, who had not seen her since Sir W——’s death. On entering the room she burst into a flood of tears and cried out, “ Ah ! he’s gone ! ” The gentleman made some remark upon the occasion, and she repeated, “ *Ah ! he’s gone*—at four o’clock this morning.” At this the gentleman stared, knowing Sir W—— had been dead more than a month ; when he discovered that “ he’s gone ! ” alluded to Lord Nelson, who was that morning gone to his ship. Being a great friend of Sir W——’s, the gentleman felt provoked and hurt, and left the room without attempting to give her any consolation.

No. 3.—*The irresistible Duchess.*

Her Grace was driving about the streets in search of a house, when all of a sudden she exclaimed, “I’ve got one!” and desired the coachman to drive to Lord Fife’s. My Lord was *not at home*; but she made her way up stairs and found him at a late breakfast.

“My Lord, you were in love with me five-and-twenty years ago, and I am now come to ask a favour of you.”

“Ma’am, I admit the fact; but as I cannot boast of any favour your Grace bestowed upon me, I don’t see what claim you derive from that circumstance.”

“My Lord, it matters not; I have a favour to ask, nor shall I stir from this chair till it is granted.”

She then asked for Lord Fife’s house. In vain he remonstrated, and gave her a great many reasons why it could not be. Nevertheless, he was out of it in a week, and her Grace in full possession. Nor has she lost any time in opening it—balls, petit soupers, &c. But what improves the story much is, what I dare say you know, that the two families have been at *daggers drawn* for these fifteen years on account of politics.

No. 4.

The same lady, when attending upon Lady Louisa Broome, in her lying-in, turned round to the doctor:—"Remember, Sir, I engage you for this time twelvemonth. My Georgie is just going to be married—mind you are engaged to her."

No. 5.

Having married all her daughters, she says now she must set about marrying herself to her old Duke again.

Marriages as is to be—Interest leads to the altar.

Lady Georgiana G—— with the Duke of B——.

Miss Legge with Mr. Dutton (Lord Sherborne).

Miss Curzon with Mr. Cholmondeley.

Miss Clement with Mr. Milner.

Miss Blackburn with Mr. Leigh.

Lady Mary Paget with Lord Greaves.

Lady Caroline Paget with Lord Inniskillen.

Mrs. Bradshaw with Sir H. Peyton.

Miss L. Crofton with Col. Maitland, who was so much in love with Miss Thurlowe.

This is all the London news I can send you, which is but little. It must suffice you for the

present, however, and for the time being I will say adieu.

Believe me always your faithful

“BLUE BEARD,”

(Such is the name lately given me by Her Royal Highness, the Lord knows why), alias H. Englefield, Anacharsis, Adonis, John Julius Angerstein, W. Gell, &c., &c.

From Mrs. — to —.

MY DEAR —,

SINCE you have determined upon this step, I will say no more to dissuade you therefrom, except that I sincerely hope it may be productive of pleasure and advantage to you in every way. You quite mistook my sentiments if you suppose that I meant to express any personal dislike or disapprobation towards the Princess of Wales : it was entirely worldly considerations that made me advise you to reflect well before you placed yourself in a situation which must, from the nature of things, be one of dangers and difficulties ; and certainly, whoever embraces the service of the Princess of Wales, as matters now stand between her and the Prince, place themselves (or at least

run a great risk of doing so) for ever out of the pale of his favour. Now, as he is the person in whom all power and authority will be vested, in a worldly point of view, it is his countenance that is alone worth seeking. *Au reste*, I believe the Princess to be exceedingly amiable—a true and zealous friend to all those whom she once takes *en amitié*; and is moreover an excessively agreeable companion, full of natural talent, and combines in a surprising manner the dignity of her position with an unaffected and natural ease very rarely seen in a Princess. It is, indeed, only fair to add, that she makes it a point to draw about her all the clever and agreeable persons she can; and that, particularly in a *royalty*, is no small merit. There are no courtiers or parasites in the society at Kensington; it is chosen with great discrimination and impartiality, from all that is most distinguished in rank and talent, and, above all, *agrément* is the greatest attraction a person can have for Her Royal Highness. You have hitherto been no *politician*, but you must become one, for the Princess will call upon you in that way. She is now *flaming* against the present Ministers, and inviting to the palace all she can collect of the Opposition. You will have a great advantage in this circumstance, as no one can deny that they

are, with some few exceptions, a more agreeable body of people *en masse* than the principal heads of the Tory party.

You ask me to tell you something of the individuals who form the Princess of Wales's household, and if they are persons of amiable and agreeable qualities. I can give you a most satisfactory reply to this inquiry. They are all known to me personally, some more and some less ; but, through others of my friends who are intimate with several of them, I am able to say that I feel sure you will find them all particularly honourable and superior persons. Of Lady C— L—y's wit, and proverbial good humour and kindness of heart, you must be well acquainted ; her sister, also, though less brilliant, is fully as amiable. Miss G—th is a very estimable character, simple-minded, and very downright in all she says, and little suited to a Court, except from her high principles and admirable caution, which indeed render her a safe and desirable attendant upon royalty. Miss Hayman is shrewd and sensible ; she has strong sense and good judgment ; she plays well on the piano-forte, and understands the science of music, and has very agreeable manners, though not polished ones. All these persons are totally different from the common-place run of character, and the Prin-

cess's selection of such persons does her infinite credit, as they are of a very different quality from those who generally occupy places at a Court.

Amongst the visitors at Kensington you will frequently see Messrs. Rogers, Luttrell, Ward, and a host of brilliant spirits; so that I think I may with safety predict for you a pleasant life at the palace. I have only one piece of advice to give you; it is, not to receive *any* confidences. Be firm, and decline being made the repository of any secrets. This course is the only one that can ensure your own safety and comfort. I will also tell you an anecdote related to me by one of the ladies in Her Royal Highness's service:—Upon one occasion, the Princess wished to visit a person whom Lady —— knew it was not wise for her to frequent, and she ventured to express her opinion upon the subject to the Princess, upon which the latter was much displeased, and said there was nothing she so much disliked and *despised* as advice. Lady —— never repeated the dose, as you may suppose; and I have told you this circumstance to put you on your guard, that you may not incur the same rebuke.

I have now informed you of all I know respecting the Princess and her *entourage*, so I will conclude, begging you to believe me, &c.

From the same.

MY DEAR ——.

THE Duchess of Brunswick is dead. Doubtless you are aware of the event ; but I write to say that I would recommend your sending to inquire after the Princess of Wales, for, poor soul ! she is much vexed at the carelessness of all the royal family, in never having condoled with her on the occasion ; and also many private persons, who ought to have paid Her Royal Highness this respect and attention, have neglected to do so, and she has, I know, been much hurt, and complained to Miss H——n that the manner in which she was treated was most unkind. I would not have you negligent towards Her Royal Highness ; and knowing, as you do, that, in fact, this event will not render the Princess long or exceedingly unhappy, I thought you would perhaps not consider it worth while to *write* on the occasion, whereas I am certain it would pain Her Royal Highness if you did not do so. Miss H—— told me she was much affected on first hearing of the Duchess's death ; which I can believe ; for although her mother's habits and tastes did not suit the Princess, and she disliked the dulness of her house and society, the Princess is too good-hearted not to regret the death of so near a rela-

tive ; and she most touchingly observed to Miss H——, “ There is no one alive now who cares for me except my daughter, and her they will not suffer to love me as she ought or is inclined to do.”

The Princess also said : “ True, my moder behave ill to me several times, and did eat humble pie to the Queen and the Prince ; yet she only did so from cowardice ; she was grown old, and was soon *terrified*, but she love me for all that.”

This remark was perfectly just, and in fact I know, from many conversations I had with the Duchess of Brunswick, that such was the case. I hear that the little property she was able to leave she has bequeathed to the Princess of Wales. I am glad to hear it, for I fancy the latter is much in need of a little pecuniary assistance, and every *mickle makes a muckle*, as the Scotch saying is. I hope poor Mr. H——, however, will not risk his own interests by serving the Princess, and forwarding Her Royal Highness much more money, for I do not think he would stand a good chance of getting paid if anything befell Her Royal Highness.

I dined at Kensington about three weeks ago. There were Lord and Lady C——t, and Mr. Ward, Mr. Luttrell, Lord Byron, and Lady Oxford, and the party was exceedingly agreeable. I never saw any person, not royal or royal, who

understood so well how to perform the honours at their own table as the Princess: she does it admirably, and makes more of her guests than any one else ever did. Lady C—— is beautiful, and is so gentle, and seems to wish so much to improve herself, that she is quite interesting. I went to see her picture the other day, painted by Lawrence: I should never have known it was intended for her, it is so little like; but it is a lovely picture—I think one of his best. I saw poor Lady Maria H——n yesterday at A—— House. She was quite overcome at seeing me, and scarcely could speak. She is grown thin with anxiety, and the scene of woe which she constantly witnesses in her sister's dying state has quite softened the asperity of her manners. From that melancholy visit I also went to another, where I witnessed more gloom: it was at Mrs. Nugent's; but I only saw her daughter, for she herself is too ill to see any one. Miss —— appears clever, and has something remarkable in her appearance and manners; but whether 'tis for good or bad I cannot say. Her poor mother has been cruelly treated, I think, by the Duke of C——; yet what right had she to expect any other result to her own folly? I met at the Duchess of Leinster's, some days since, a daughter of the Lord Edward Fitzgerald's, a girl of about fifteen years of age, with a

most beautiful countenance, and a captivating manner and voice, which added to the interest one felt in looking at *her* father's child. Your friend Mrs. C. L——k is grown into an old woman. Her countenance is all hard lines upon an orange ground. I met her at the Duchess of Leinster's, and she inquired much after you, as also did Lady W. G——n, whom I found as usual, *simmering*, as she calls it, in a high-backed old chair, which she told me was Mr. George Selwyn's, of witty memory. I do not like the arrangement of her house in the Park which looks so pretty outside. Lady W—— talked in a strange manner upon strange subjects. I do not like speaking of religious matters, and mixing such sacred topics with the common-place and frivolous conversation of the day ; but Lady W—— is very eloquent and very clever in all her remarks, and it is exceedingly amusing to hear her set forth all her curious thoughts. How very different a character hers is from her sister, Lady H—— ! Who could suppose them related so nearly to one another.

I am interrupted, and so compelled par force to bid you adieu, my dear ——, which I ought to have done before now, as I fear you will be tired of this long letter.

Believe me, yours, &c.

From the same.

I WAS commanded, dear ——, by the Princess of Wales (with whom I had the honour of dining last night) to ask you to return to Her Royal Highness some books she lent you; and I take this opportunity, therefore, to add a few lines to inquire after all that interests you, and to tell you a little about myself. In the first place, I must speak of the party I was at last evening at Kensington, which consisted of Mr. Arbuthnot, Lord Palmerston, Lady C. L——, Mr. Gell, and Lewis. To use the Princess's own words, "dey all do their little possible to be agreeable;" and, as you are well acquainted with them, you can judge how pleasantly the party went off. Lord Palmerston pays the Princess great court: he is not a man to despise any person or thing by which he can hope to gain power; he has set his heart thereon, and most likely he will succeed in his ambition, like all those who fix their minds steadily to the pursuit of one object; though, except a pleasing address, it does not appear to me that he has any great claim to distinction. There is one strange circumstance connected with him, namely, that, though he is suave and pleasant in his manners, he is unpopular. I wonder what is the reason. The Princess is not, I believe, really partial to him, but she is aware that his counte-

nance is of some weight and advantage to her, and she is right to conciliate his favour.

I was very sorry to see the Princess of Wales in low spirits, and to hear her allude several times to leaving England, saying, she had no comfort or happiness in this country. She laughed very much in relating to us Lady A——'s advice, which was that she should reside at Brunswick, "where Lady A. told me I should still be under de pertection of de English. Mein Gott! I would sooner be buried alive dan live there; it is de dullest place in de world; full of noting but old German spinsters and professors of colleges. No, no, when I leave England, it will be to see all dat is best worth seeing on de continent. I go to amuse myself, else I might stay in Connaught Place." I could not help thinking that perhaps this was not a wise strain of conversation to hold before Lord Palmerston; but you know it is in vain to annoy one's self with thinking of the consequences of what the Princess says, as nothing ever prevents her saying what comes into her royal head at the moment. We all with one accord agreed in expressing our regrets at Her Royal Highness's intended departure, and assured her that we did not think she would like the continent as a residence; to which she replied, "Ah, my dear friends, 'tis all very

polite in you to say you wish me to remain in England, mais ! you do not know all I suffer here ; and, as to yourselves, you will soon forget me and my dullefications ; no, dere is notings to keep me in dis country, and I go." I was very near saying, Good heavens ! Madam, and the Princess Charlotte, is she no tie to you to remain in England ? but fortunately I restrained the expression of my thoughts ; and after a pause, which every one present appeared to feel awkward, we spoke of indifferent subjects, and became very merry,—which a good supper contributed to in no small degree. I forgot to mention that I think the rudeness and total neglect of all these foreign potentates towards the Princess, has very much vexed and mortified her : and no wonder. I marvel at the Regent's being able to keep up such a perpetual system of unkindness and malignity against the Princess. I can understand great wrath for a time, but not retaining such a constant ill-will towards a person who after all has never done anything to deserve such treatment.

I was very angry at Madame de Stael also for her subserviency to the Regent's will ; it was beneath one so great, and I had believed so amiable. But she did not so consider the matter, and she gained the reward of her courtliness, for the

Regent paid her every attention. I like her daughter very much, and fear that Madame de Stael's views of forming an alliance for her with an English noble are not likely to be realized, and that if they were, it is exceedingly doubtful that they would be productive of happiness to any of the parties.

And now I must say, adieu.

Dear —, believe me, yours, &c.

—

From Mr. — to —.

MY DEAR —,

I AM just returned from the drawing-room held in honour of Princess Charlotte's marriage; it was exceedingly brilliant, and Her Majesty was most gracious to myself and Lady —; but the Regent turned his back upon the latter, took no notice of her, and pretended to be busy talking with some other person. This conduct was at variance with His Royal Highness's proverbial courtesy and good breeding, and in my opinion was also worse even than a breach of the civility due to a lady, and one who in every way is so deserving of respect; for it betrayed a spirit of meanness and anger at her for

having been in the service of the Princess of Wales, of which I should have thought him incapable. But so it was, and I could not help recurring to the assurances he had made to Lady ——'s friends, when he was first informed of her being about to enter the Princess of Wales's service, that he never should in any way resent her doing so, but that he was well aware that circumstances in some degree compelled the lady in question to avail herself of the offer. How much his conduct yesterday was at variance with this kind and generous manner of expressing himself at the time to which I allude! Certainly, with regard to any matters connected with the Princess of Wales, the Regent cannot command his feelings, and, like murder, they will out, in despite of his usual urbanity and caution.

Lady —— was not in the least annoyed by this circumstance. Most other persons would have been so, but she was not at all flurried by the Regent's unpolite reception of her, and on my remarking how surprised I was at her composure, she made me a reply, which no less surprised than it pleased me,—“*La raison est tout simple*,” said she, “I did not feel to blame in any way, and therefore I was not put to confusion by the Prince Regent's rudeness, feeling conscious that I did not deserve to be so received. I was spared all the

awkwardness I must have experienced had I been guilty of anything that could have given His Royal Highness a right to treat me in such an uncivil manner."

The said drawing-room was, as you are aware, held in Buckingham House. Princess Charlotte stood apart from the royal circle, in a window, with her back to the light; she was deadly pale, and did not look well. It struck me that the expression of pleasure on her countenance was forced. Prince Leopold was looking about him with a keen glance of inquiry, as if he would like to know in what light people regarded him. The Queen either was, or pretended to be, in the highest possible spirits, and was very gracious to everybody, including Lady ——. All the time I was in that courtly scene, and especially as I looked at Princess Charlotte, I could not help thinking of the Princess of Wales, and feeling very sorry and very angry at her cruel fate. True, between friends, she has often been much to blame for folly and imprudence; but, when we consider of how tenfold more acts of a reprehensible nature her accusers have been guilty, it is impossible not to feel indignant at the injustice of her being put down from her proper sphere, when others equally, if not more blamable, are suffered to remain in the full possession of all their honours. Surely, such

a state of things will not be allowed to go on long ; some more just spirit will arise, and ask for redress for this poor Princess. I shall be happy when I hear that some able person brings the subject boldly forward to public notice ; at the same time that I fear it will be the means of making a great commotion in the country, and wiser heads than mine predict the possibility of this subject producing a civil war, if not most dexterously managed by the reigning powers. Then, again, I am told that the Princess will inevitably commit some enormous act of folly, that will ruin her cause ; and that, besides the heedless recklessness of her own disposition, every possible means will be taken to make her say or do something which will enable the Regent to set her aside, and for ever sink her into insignificance, if not disgrace. I can scarcely believe these reports, yet they are circulated by many sensible and dispassionate persons, who are neither violently for nor against either party. Alas ! every one's own experience more than suffices to prove to them that "*les plus fort ont toujours raison*" in this world ; yet I would fain hope that this oppressed lady (for that she certainly is) may be restored to her rightful position in society. Nay, I am certain the country would never permit her, if only as Princess Charlotte's mother, to be crushed and defamed, without a

proper examination of the justice of the condemnation.

I dare say Princess Charlotte was thinking of the Princess of Wales when she stood in the gay scene of to-day's drawing-room, and that the remembrance of her mother, excluded from all her rights and privileges in a foreign country, and left almost without any attendants, made her feel very melancholy. I never can understand how Queen Charlotte dared refuse to receive the Princess of Wales at the public drawing-room, any more than she would any other lady, of whom nothing had been publicly proved against her character. Of one thing there can be no doubt,—the Queen is the slave of the Regent.

I must say adieu, and believe me, &c.

From Monsieur Sismondi.

Paris, Rue Grenelle St. Germain, No. 26, Lundi.

CHERE —.

C'est à Paris que votre gentille lettre m'est parvenue. J'y ai vu avec joie que vous ne m'aviez point oublié, que vous mettiez encore quelque prix à mon vif attachement, et que vous sentiriez du plaisir à notre réunion, mais en même tems j'ai vu cette réunion renvoyée bien loin. Hélas,

elle est devenue bien problématique. Vous me donnez vos visions prophétiques *on my future fame and future fortune*, et puis vous me plaisantez comme si je croyois déjà tenir en partie cet avenir brillant que vous me promettez. Hélas, je suis bien éloigné d'avoir tant de prétension. J'ai tracé autour de moi le petit cercle que je parcourerai ; je mesure assez bien tout ce que je puis jamais obtenir de réputation, et le très modique fortune qui y sera jamais jointe, et il ne faut point pour cela, je vous assure, aspire à des hauteurs propre à tourner la tête. Mais la partie de ce rêve la plus agréable pour moi c'est la facilité qu'il m'a donné de voir et de connoître des gens que je suis heureux d'aimer ; c'est un profit bien réel dû aux lettres, qui m'ont introduit auprès de vous et votre bienveillance. C'est encore à elle que je dois ce point de vue d'où je jouis à mon aise d'observer ici la société. C'est une chose très-curieuse que la marche de l'opinion en deux sens diamétralement oppose les progrès journaliers que font les idées libérales dans le peuple, le retours toujours plus impudent des courtisans aux anciens usages, aux anciens absurdes préjugées. Tous les émigrés, tous les royalistes, tous ceux qui par vanité ou par intérêt veulent être confondu avec les unes ou les autres, ne regardent la restauration que comme le commencement de la contre-révolution. Ils y travail-

lent dès lors avec zèle ; chaque jour ils font un pas pour opprimer quelque forme libérale, pour écarter quelque personne qui ne leur soit pas dévoué. Le Roi s'est tiré, au commencement, de la grande difficulté de règne avec les instrumens même du gouvernement qu'il venoit de détruire ; mais dans ces six mois il a déjà trouvé moyen de récompenser à sa guise une grande partie des états-majors, l'armée des préfeteurs, et de toute l'administration civile et judiciaire. Ces messieurs sont beaucoup plus dans ses mains qu'ils n'étoient alors, les marins lui ont beaucoup près échappé, et l'armée de la peuple ont oublié les malheurs de la guerre pour ne se souvenir que de sa gloire. Le rentrée des émigrés dans tous les cadres de l'armée, dans toutes les places lucratives et honorables, blessoit déjà les sentimens nationaux ; l'insolence qu'il y ont déployée les blesse davantage encore. toute irritation, toute animosité contre les prêtres et la noblesse, avoient complètement cessé sous le gouvernement précédent ; on reprenoit pour eux une disposition aux égards que la commisération pour des long malheurs rendroit plus délicate. Aujourd'hui on ne voit plus en eux que personnalité, arrogance, fausseté, et bassesse ; le peuple, à la haine qui éclata contre eux au commencement de la révolution, a joint le mépris, et une réaction violente deviendra inévitablement la conséquence d'une

irritation si générale, d'une fermentation qui s'est étendue de la capitale dans toutes les provinces. Il est difficile au reste de savoir à quand sont ajournés les scènes nouvelles de désordre et de malheur.

Votre Princesse de Galle v'a-t-elle en Grèce ? On dit qu'elle ne se conduit pas à Como avec une grande prudence. Il est vrai que la prudence qu'on lui demande c'est de ménager des sentimens qu'elle ne partage point, et qui ne sont peut-être pas les meilleurs. L'accusation contre notre amie,* qu'on taxe aussi d'imprudence, étoit d'avoir répondu par une lettre de simple remerciement à des offres de Murat. Elle le nie expressément ; quand il seroit vraie, il n'y auroit pas eu grand mal ; la chose est au reste absolument oubliée. Notre amie a aujourd'hui la promesse positive du paiement de ses deux millions. Elle marie sa fille au Duc de Broglie, homme de beaucoup d'esprit, d'excellens principes, âgé de vingt-neuf ans, d'une jolie figure, mais qui à très peu de fortune : le mariage se fera au mois d'Avril. Albertine en paroît fort heureuse.

Je viens de voir arrivé hier ici une autre belle épousée, Lady Elizabeth Bingham, avec son père Lord Lucan ; ils vont rejoindre à Londres Monsieur Vernon : les deux autres filles sont restées à Florence sous la garde de Lady William Bentinck, &c. &c.

* Probably Madame de Staël.

EXTRACT.

From the same to the same.

SIR James Mackintosh arriva hier, avec sa belle Babylonienne, qu'il avoit rencontrée à Bâle ; mais il repartit dès le surlendemain. Cette jeune femme, qui a traversé à cheval toute l'Assyrie, l'Arménie, l'Asie Mineure ; qui, ne voyageant qu'avec des hommes, étoit elle-même habillé en *Warrior* Tartare ; dévroit faire peur, avec de sabres et de pistolets, à ceux qui auroient osé l'approcher. Elle est cependant jolie, délicate, et légère, quoiqu'elle ait à la joue une cicatrice qui ne ressemble pas mal au coup d'une arme à feu. Sa conversation étoit piquante, et on auroit été tenté de lui faire la cour, comme à toute autre jolie femme, quand le voyage qu'elle achève à peine, et qu'elle va recommencer, ne l'auroit pas rendue une être extraordinaire. Mais elle ne fait que passer.

Vous aurez auprès de vous avant ma lettre les Glenbervies, qui vous diront combien ils ont eu de prévenance pour moi. Lord Lucan, Lord Binning, &c., sont partie. Monsieur Macdonald part ce matin. Lord Rancliffe fait le tour du lac. Il ne reste plus enfin que les Butes, que je n'ai point vue, et les Conynghams. Celles des sociétés de Genève qui m'est agréable, et que vous n'avez guère pu voir parcequ'elles étoient toute dispersée dans les campagnes, ne rentrerons pas de deux

mois à la ville ; le reste de celles que vous avez vue sont trop décolorés une fois que vous n'y êtes plus. Il faut donc par nécessité se faire d'autres délassemens, se jeter dans la politique, et celle de notre petite ville, animée par un si petit esprit, a bien peu d'attrait. Notre grand conseil, notre Parlement, a recommencé sa session au milieu de la semaine, mais il est encore perdu dans les formes ; il n'a eu que des élections à faire ; personne n'a ouvert la bouche, et nous ne pourrons point encore préjuger quelle sera cette éloquence Genevoise, dont il doit devenir l'école.

De dehors, j'ai de bonnes nouvelles sur la parfaite sûreté des routes d'Italie ; le plupart des contes de voleurs, dont on nous avoit entretenus, paroissent n'avoir aucune fondement. J'ai aussi une lettre de Madame de Staël, dont le fils qu'on disoit parti ne partira point pour la Suède avant le fin du mois. Elle est triste, et cependant rien ne va mal pour elle ; mais il est difficile qu'aucune lettre qu'on écrit ne fasse faire des retours mélancoliques sur soi-même ; on se livre au mouvement du monde tant qu'on est animé par la conversation, mais on retrouve toute ses amères pensées quand on est seul, et quand on rend compte de soi-même à un ami.

Voilà toute notre Gazette ; vous voyez comme elle est peu variée, mais je vous la donne pour vous engager à me donner la vôtre, &c. &c. &c.

EXTRACT.

From the same to the same.

TOUTE ma société Britannique est partie. Je l'ai trop aimée pour prendre beaucoup de goût à celle qui leur succède, et j'en suis réduit à faire dommage à notre petit conseil de tout ce qui me reste d'amour ou d'humeur. La politique est devenue mon pis aller. J'ai reçu une lettre de Monsieur Camille Jourdain, qui, par ses regrets de ne vous avoir point vu, augmente les miens. Monsieur Jourdain s'intéresse pour ma brochure des nègres; en général elle paroît avoir du succès, et Monsieur Wilberforce m'a écrit à cette occasion de la manière la plus flatteuse, en m'envoyant une de ses dernières ouvrages. Mais d'autre part, j'ai reçu la plus impertinente lettre d'une dame de Lausanne que jamais femme s'est permis d'écrire à une homme. C'est une bigotte qui, dit-elle, a été ruinée par la révolution de St. Dominique; qui regard les amis des noirs comme les ennemies des blancs, et les auteurs de tous les massacres, et qui m'accusoit volontiers d'être Athée et Antropophage, pour avoir écrit une brochure qu'elle m'a renvoyé. Je ne m'attendois pas à ce qu'on soutien d'un ton si haut la cause de la férocité.

Vous faisez sur quelques rapports bien de l'honneur à Lyon, de vous rappeler de Londres

à cause des mouvemens de ses rues ; il me semble qu'on s'y sent terriblement dans une ville de province, dans une ville marchande, où l'on ne suppose pas même qu'il dût y trouver une bonne société ; mais en revanche quelle situation admirable, et si les provinces du midi avoient dû avoir une capitale, quelle ville mieux placée pour l'être que Lyon ! Vous n'avez probablement rien pu voir de ces bords de la Seine, qui sont d'une si admirable beauté, ni de ce vieux fauxbourg de Veze, quelquefois si pittoresque. Moi aussi je dis souvent que j'aurois aimé faire ce voyage avec vous. Vous aimez admirer, et moi j'aime ceux qui admirent, et j'aurois eu plus d'objets à admirer que vous. A présent vous êtes dans un pays que je ne connois point, mais que je crois ressembler très fort à notre Toscane. Toute cette rivière de Gêne est de même nature, et le revers de l'Appenin, plantés d'oliviers, entremêlés de champs et de vignes, des villages plantés à la cime des montagnes ou au bord de la mer—ces terraces les unes au dessus des autres—forment des objets toujours variées, mais pourtant tous de la même famille. Il me semble donc que je me représente fort bien le pays où vous êtes ; je voudrois que mon imagination vous peignoît aussi bien vous-même à mes yeux ; mais à cet égard je ne me contente pas—il s'en faut beaucoup. Depuis ma lettre commencée j'en ai

reçu une d'Albertine de Staël, qui me dit que sa mère n'est pas très-bien de santé, et que quoique sa maison soit très brillante, elle semble ne plus trouver de grandes jouissances dans la société. Je suis réellement bien inquiet du bonheur futur de Madame de Staël ; elle s'est livrée à chacun de ses goûts avec tant de vivacité qu'elle a épuisé tout ce qu'ils pourroit lui donner de jouissances. Pendant bien des années le bonheur suprême étoit pour elle de rentrer à Paris ; depuis qu'elle y est rentrée elle s'est tristement apperçue que ce bonheur suprême ne ce trouve pas, et cependant elle n'a point appris à s'en passer. Le portrait que me fait Albertine de votre Lord Wellington ne me séduit point ; il paroît cependant qu'il a pris beaucoup d'attachement pour sa mère, et qu'il est très fréquemment chez elle. Il n'y a rien de nouveau ni sur leurs affaires d'argent ni sur aucun projet de mariage.

Sûrement il est sage et convenable d'aller à Paris cet hiver. Comme je l'avois comté, j'y terminerai et j'y imprimerai mon livre, j'y trouverai bien aussi des amis et du plaisir ; mais je ne me reprocherai pas à moi-même d'avoir laissé et le soin de mon bien et celui des affaires publiques uniquement pour satisfaire mes goûts ; j'aurois un prétexte avec moi-même, et c'est presque aussi important que d'en avoir avec les autres : c'est précisément dans un mois que je compte partir. Notre session de corps légis-

latif ne sera pas terminée, mais comme je m'y trouve constamment dans la minorité, ce sera avoir assez long temps soutenu la lutte. Cette école pour parler en public a été fort nouvelle pour moi, et à tout prendre, fort agréable. Je ne savois point si je pourrois m'en tirer ; je m'attendis à être interdit—à ne pouvoir pas mettre une phrase après l'autre ; —mais je sçait cependant que je me forme, et il y a presque autant de plaisir à parler dans notre république Liliputienne que dans le Parlement Britannique, puisque les questions que nous débattons,—l'établissement d'une troupe soldât, les impôts, l'institution de l'ordre judiciaire, le code pénal,—sont pour chaque citoyen d'un intérêt parfaitement égal que. * * *

Je regrette seulement quelquefois que personne ne nous entende. Entre autres des vieux préjugés de nos magistrats que nous attaquerons, j'espère que nous parviendrons à les dégoûter de la ridicule fermeture de nos portes. Je vais essayer de vous envoyer par la poste une nouvelle brochure que je viens de publier sur les nègres ; elle est jointe à une troisième édition de celle que vous connoissez, mais Dieu sait si elle vous parviendra. Conservez-moi votre amitié, et croyez à mon vif attachement comme à mon profond respect.

(Dated) Genève.—Mardi.

From Mrs.—— to the Hon. Mrs.——.

MY DEAR ——,

I RECEIVED your letter of the seventh, with great pleasure, but I wish you were safe at home, though as yet you have experienced no difficulty : but things are in such a state, one does not know what will happen. What a dreadful business this has been at Waterloo ! Every body directly or indirectly feels it, and every day one hears of some new cause of pity ; a *true* list, it is well known, has not been given, which is very wrong, for many people are in a dreadful state of uncertainty about their friends. Amongst others, Frank Moore till Saturday night was quite ignorant whether his only son was dead or alive ; but he got to speak to the Duke of York, who assured him he was quite safe ; a convincing proof they know more than they choose to tell.

There were illuminations at the public offices, but they were far from general. They say Wellington was never so near being beaten ; he saw the moment, and cried out, “ Come, my boys, give them three cheers, and attack them ! ” which was done with such force, that it decided the fate of the day. It is very evident he was determined to conquer or die. One may well say, as was said on another occasion, “ such another victory would

ruin us." We have been drawn upon for 36 millions!!! which they are giving away as fast as they can. The Duke of C——d is come for money, and a settlement for his wife. I am assured he has obtained the latter request.

There has been a French play at the Argyll Rooms by private subscription. At first it was very bad, but they have got some tolerable actors now; they talk of going on with it next winter, but it is thought it will be stopped.

London is very dull this season. Paris will now, I suppose, be the scene of all the rejoicings on this glorious victory. It is said, Bonaparte is in bad health; and this overthrow to all his greatness will not mend it, I should suppose. Mrs. W. and her *tribe* are well. We called one day at W.'s, and found them *tête-a-tête most uncomfortably*; we went another to dear Strawberry, which is very well kept in *her* way.

Believe me, dear ——, &c.

Letter from Mrs. ——.

Florence.

EVERY day since I have been here, dear ——, I have been myself to the post-office in vain, expecting a letter from you, till at length yesterday my eyes were gladdened by the sight of

your handwriting. I told you in my last letter of our journey from Milan hither, which was not very interesting. The country is amazingly rich, and highly cultivated, but not very picturesque, till you come near the Apennines. We were two days and a half crossing them,—snow and tempest all the while. Florence swarms with English at this time. There are soirées twice a week at Madame Apponi's, the Austrian minister's wife; they are both delightful people, but I cannot say much for the Florentine society. Madame Apponi sings delightfully, and so also does a Duchesse de Lanti; but I believe the latter is not altogether a praiseworthy character, though she is one of the principal personages at Florence, and generally received, and paid great court to. The Duchesse, Madame A——, Magnelli, and David, the famous stage singer, are generally at Lady B——'s every Saturday evening, and they make her parties agreeable, otherwise they would be the most tiresome things possible, for it is impossible to have worse manners than her Ladyship; she is like an ill-bred school miss, vulgarly familiar with one or two, and never speaking a word to the rest of her company. Lord B—— is more agreeable and well-mannered, and is a delightful musician. Mr. P——, his secretary, likewise sings very well. Pretty Mrs. Cadogan is here, and Lord and Lady

Ponsonby, likewise. I saw Lady Glenbervie the day I arrived here. She set off the next to Rome. She never hears from the Princess of Wales now, and has at length discontinued writing; as she received no answers to her letters, she concluded they were not welcome, or that the Princess is displeased with her. Lady Glenbervie expressed herself with much kindness on this melancholy subject. Mr. Douglas was with the Glenbervies, which makes his mother quite happy. Poor Lady Bute is dying, I am sure; she has been much worse lately. Mr. Burrell was dreadfully snocked at Lady Malpas's death, and indeed so were all the English here: it is supposed she died of consumption. Miss M—— will be setting her cap, I dare say, at Lord Malpas, as soon as it is decent to do so. Do you not think Lord Aberdeen's marriage to Lady Hamilton an odd circumstance? She has not mourned her first husband long.

Is it true that the Prince Regent purposes trying to get a divorce from his unhappy consort, so soon as he is King, and that she enforces her right to being Queen? I do not approve of her conduct, but I am exceedingly sorry for her, and think she has been as much sinned against as sinning. I should think and hope the Prince can do her no further wrong.

This Milan commission is an odious piece of business, and a disgrace to all those who have taken a part in it. The English here are generally in favour of the Princess, but she is doing all she can to forfeit their good opinion. I heard that Willikin had quarrelled with the courier, and left the villa d'Este; what have you heard on this subject lately? Willikin always appeared to me to be a well-behaved, sensible child. I trust this rogue will not be permitted to injure the poor boy, but I fear his power is unlimited.

Lord Byron passed through Florence a few days since, and dined at Lady ——'s, where I was invited; but I did not like to gaze at him, though I wished it; for there is something to me derogatory to feminine dignity in the effrontery of running after a man to stare at him, because he has written a clever work, or because he is dressed in some peculiar costume. It is, in my opinion, beneath a lady, and impertinent to a man's feelings, if he has any, to indulge in such rude curiosity, by courting his attention to such an extent as I have often seen ladies do towards Lord Byron. I did not therefore pay him so much attention as I would have done a person of less celebrity: but at supper I sat next him, and he entered into conversation with me. The few words he spoke

were uttered in a voice peculiarly melodious. As to his person, 'tis nothing ; his countenance is replete with intelligence, but far from being regularly handsome. He appeared to me annoyed by the excess of attention lavished upon him by all the ladies ; and I was much amused by one very ugly woman, who said she would go a thousand miles to see him, and whose ecstasy was so great when she was introduced to the poet, that I thought she would have fallen on her knees before him,—she was speechless with delight. But what made this lady's admiration so diverting was, that she is certainly one of the plainest people it is possible to see ; and I thought how the object of her adoration would ridicule the poor foolish woman.

And now I have filled this sheet, and not said half what I have to say. I must employ the remnant of space left to me, to entreat you to write soon, and to believe me always yours, &c.

From the same to the same.

MY DEAR ———.

I learn that you are anxious to have some tidings of me, and I hasten to relieve your kind anxiety about myself. All Rome is quite dis-

tracted at the arrival of the Emperor, and at the expected galas which are to ensue at the same time. The Romans themselves look upon this visit as one of *mauvaise augure* to their ancient government and their ancient Pope. I went into the Corso yesterday, and looked at the show from a window. The street was filled with an innumerable concourse of people of all descriptions. Tapestry and satin bed covers, &c., were suspended from the balconies, every one of which was crowded with well-dressed people; in short, it was the Carnival over again, only without noise and in fine weather. After all, what was it set us all gaping, to see about twenty or thirty state carriages drive past, for it was not possible to distinguish the people in them? Cannon fired from the Porta del Popolo, and was answered by the Castle of St. Angelo. Hats were slowly and unwillingly taken off. No huzzas, no tokens of approbation were bestowed upon the whole cavalcade, which passed along in a dead silence to the Monte Cavallo, where the Emperor had an interview with the Pope, which must have been short, as the Pope passed our house half an hour afterwards, on his usual airing; and so ended this eventful entrée. It is said that Marie Louise was not permitted to come further than Florence, for wherever she appears, universal applause and ac-

clamations ensue, in contradistinction to the marked coldness shown the Emperor. I have not yet heard what are the orders of the day in the way of entertainments or revels, pious or impious, as we have no ambassador here, and the English are generally disliked. I conclude we shall be all excluded from these festivities. Gell and Craven dined with us two days ago,—just as amiable, just the same as ever,—can I say more for them? in short, exactly what Lady Glenbervie used to say to her son,—*not in the least improved*: perhaps you will think otherwise, however, for Sir W. Gell is so far changed that much of his gay spirits are subdued, for he is quite a cripple from gout. Craven you will see shortly in England. I charged him to see you, which required no charge. Lord Guildford is also here, and to remain here another week: he looks as well as ever, and is as charming. He dined with us yesterday. I see the Duchess of Devonshire frequently; she is suave and pleasant in society, and is an invaluable friend here to the English. It is impossible to give you an idea of how unpopular our country people have made themselves with the Romans. During the Carnival they did all sorts of violent silly things, which have gained them this bad name. Sir William Gell heard a few days since from the Princess of Wales, and

in her letter she hints at the probability of her returning soon to England. I hope she may put this good intention speedily into execution. Sir W. Gell is averse to remaining in her service, and, if she could find another eligible person to replace him, would resign his situation ; but he does not like to do so before Her Royal Highness has found a successor to himself. He is the kindest-hearted person in the world.

Adieu, my dear ——.

Believe me, &c.



SKETCHES
OF
DISTINGUISHED PUBLIC CHARACTERS
OF THE
REGENCY AND REIGN
OF
GEORGE THE FOURTH.

SKETCHES, &c.

LETTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

You really do me what I feel to be too much honour, when you ask me to say what I think of those whom you mention. In fact, it is my nature's weakness not to judge of others so decidedly as those do who make better portraits; for I am not a good hater. I can and do as abstemiously withhold my friendship from a foe as any good Christian in the world; but the devil surely makes me not think so bad of them as they may have given me reason to do. The consequence of this infirmity is, that I could never find in my heart to abuse a Whig as some of my friends so heartily do, nor to be hand in glove with any Tory. I am, indeed, a curious *lusus naturæ*, for, in confidence, I never could abide the superhuman aristo-

crazy of the Tories, and found the Whigs always as ductile as lead, which, in the opinion of many, they so much resemble. I remember the Earl of B—— saying to me, one day, that I ought to be a Whig ; he was one, and they were in opposition. But I convinced him that wise poor men have too much to do to get their bit and their drop ever to go gallivanting about with the train of the Goddess of Reason, when she reveals herself in the oratory of a market-place demagogue ; and I conclude in the words of the Scottish song, that as for being a practical Tory I never would, for—

*A Tory's "like a chubby clute
Made by the hand of G—d,"*

and must just be endured as it is sent into the world. At the same time I felt the gravitating of the original sin within myself.

When I mingled more with the world than I have been able to do for “seven long years and more,” I had a greater unconscious deference for the opinion of others than I have now. I do not say that I think more wisely, but I am quite certain that I do not regard many a character with the reverence I did then, chiefly because my estimate of things is changed by the influence, it may be of my own altered condition, and because qualities and circumstances, which I once thought

highly valuable, seem to have become much deteriorated.

Formerly I perhaps did not aspire to be singular in my appreciation of eminent men. I rather thought of them along with a large portion of the public, than for myself; accordingly I differed less in opinion from those who were of similar principles to mine than I may now be found to do; and yet I think myself in sentiment not much changed. It is not the qualities I once admired that have changed, but it is the tendency of qualities that I do not regard as so estimable. Men have not, perhaps, undergone much modification; but I do not see their objects and pursuits in the light I once did. I regard greatness as more to be measured by the boons to mankind which may be achieved by all, than by services to any particular nation.

LETTER II.

COBBETT.

My acquaintance with Cobbett began while he was resident, for the first time, in Philadelphia. A friend of mine had somehow got hold of a number of the journal which he then so bravely published in that city, and he lent it to me, with many commendations on its fearless spirit. I read it with no less delight. The effect was like the experience of a new sensation, so much was I struck with the colloquial ease of the style and the athletic vigour which pervades every part, expression, thought, and determination.

Some time after, before the *Porcupine* newspaper was published in London, I obtained a short

memoir of him, written by himself, full of that hardihood and yeoman sturdiness which had so excited me in his American paper. After this the *Porcupine* was ordered for our public reading-room, and I need not say was a special favourite with me. To every sentiment respecting the preliminary treaty for the peace of Amiens my bosom responded as literally as an echo, and I think my literary début was in that paper.

Afterwards Mr. Cobbett began his far-famed *Register*, which I ordered for myself, because the managers of the reading-room did not approve of it. I was then too young to be openly a political patron, but I well recollect that, by insinuating a *canny* word now and then, I did get the *Register* ordered for the public room, where it continues to be filed perhaps even yet.

Since that time I have been his constant admirer. I do not say that at all times I have agreed with him, either in his opinions of persons or things, but my notion of him as a rare and fine specimen of the English frankling has never changed. I have always regarded him as the Burns of England; even superior to the poet in influence, because he has lived longer and has addressed himself to a less imaginative class than the far forecasting peasantry of Scotland.

I do not care whether there may be one who will

agree with me or no ; but I will say of Cobbett that while there are nations such men are wanted. His hearty prejudices are English ; they are expressed with a bravery that never allows you to question his earnestness, and often with a degree of eloquence that makes the blood career in the veins, despite of hesitation in the mind to admit his dogmas. You cannot read what he says without feeling excitement, even though you may rise from the perusal with doubt. I do not, therefore, think his blemishes so heinous as some do ; they are characteristic of that intrepid and manly race who have made their way to the front seats at the grand spectacles of the age.

It is not for his talents and enterprise that I respect this Shakspeare of English politics, or rejoice now that he is in Parliament ; but because he adequately represents a sturdy independent race. His very alleged inconsistencies seem consistent with my notions of his character : his principles, or rather his habitudes, have never changed, but his estimates of men and things often. It is for those who do not distinguish between principle and notion to talk of his inconsistency, and who struggle for fortune or celebrity by regulating themselves agreeably to others ; but Cobbett cannot do that ; he feels too strongly, and often so justly, that he is the very oracle of the English people.

He is not, I allow, the prototype of the English gentleman or scholar ; we have abundance of such ; but he is a “ *village Hampden*,” and to be sensible of his consistency we must look to his highly original character. He is all for England, and only differs in his reasonings as her interests change.

LETTER III.

COLERIDGE.—WORDSWORTH.

I FEAR you will think me intentionally paradoxical, or at least choosing to differ in opinion from the world. At this moment I am persuaded that few will coincide with me as to my estimate of a real man of genius, Coleridge. Nevertheless I will speak out, and here it is. I think he was a *daft* man, a metaphysical *havrel*; not a perfect idiot, but one whose discernment and imaginations were of as little use to mankind as the ravings of a Bedlamite who confides to the walls of his cell that he has discovered the perpetual motion, the immortal elixir, and all that; and yet I freely confess that, as a Highland gentleman once said to me of a stanza of *Bardolph* Sheridan's metre, I think "*the ancient mariner*" has a "nerve." I never met with a man of acknowledged talent who had so

little common sense as Coleridge ; had his mother not been born before him, I verily imagine he would not have known what end of the spoon to use.

I went to visit him with a very intelligent mutual friend. Oh, mon dieu ! what a *spate* of clatter ! He reminded me of an old *leddy's* description of King George III. whom she went to see, with her five daughters, in the robing-room of the Parliament House. She told me that two Peers put his robes on, " but he lifted the crown with his own hands, and placing it on himself, he looked around to us all, a perfect King, *and his tongue never lay.*"

Ever since that visit to Coleridge I have never been able to think of him but as one of the images on the wells of Lithgow, who do nothing but *bock* water : and yet he is generally, almost indeed universally, regarded as a poet. I am sure if poets be such like things, they are, indeed, more for ornament than use. What has he done that we should be so deaved* with him ? Never did I hear so many words in the same given space of time uttered with so little sense, or knew, till then, the meaning of the phrase " the chaff of thought."

Of his merits as a man and a citizen I know literally nothing whatever. Towards him I have no feeling but a sort of wonder at the prodigality

* A Scotticism for deafened.

of words which he squandered ; but I should be surprised to hear that he ever attempted or did one useful thing. I cannot think of the gifted Coleridge but as something analogous to an *Æolian* harp, a valueless box, with strings over it by which it discourses most eloquent music.

Wordsworth stands associated in my mind with Coleridge from the mere circumstance of meeting, when young, with their names together in the same publication. It certainly reflects, I know not how, a curious honour on him, that he should ever since have been recognised as one of my most efficient teachers. I have since been over much of the world, seen more than a dozen different nations and people, and been intimate with almost all the greatest men of my time, yet have ever found that the lessons he taught in his preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*, when I was a stripling, illustrated a correct and an acute view of human nature. He may not have since produced any work so superior as to obtain the profoundest reverence of all readers, or of such a majority of them as to entitle him to be classed among the stars ; but he is unquestionably one of those men whom Providence sends to advise others wisely. I would give a great deal to enjoy an unpremeditated colloquy with Wordsworth ; and I rather think it is owing to some consciousness of his superior discernment of the fitness of things that

makes him appear to many others as shaded with the shadow of overweening conceit. I know nothing of him personally; but there is a tone of goodness in his writings more engaging than the music of the muse, and I often catch myself repeating lines and thoughts of his which many many years, and the events of a troubled life, have passed since I read. But these kind of spontaneous recollections are effects of all superior minds, and I would not require other proof of Wordsworth being no ordinary man, than that he has noticed, felt, and expressed emotions and things which have a mirror and an echo in every bosom.

It is, however, by quotations that the rank of Wordsworth, I think, should be estimated. His large works have no merit comparable to the genius he shows in passages; but in detached passages he appears to be a *thinker* of the very highest order, perhaps a poet, for occasionally I meet with in his pages sentences of the most exquisite beauty and truth. By these I would claim for him a place on the same shelf with Shakspeare. They are as pure and precious pearls compared with the outside of the shells in which the gems are found.

LETTER IV.

LORD ERSKINE.

Portrait painters have a better discernment of the characteristics of strangers than of those of their most intimate associates. Why is not easily explained, but I am convinced (not persuaded) that it is the case, for I feel myself often having a curiously clearer apprehension of the peculiarities of comparative strangers, than of persons with whom I am much more familiar. Lord Erskine is an instance. I was not on very familiar terms with his Lordship, but he was one whom I thought I knew passing well, and believed I could influence by biassing his good nature; for his weakness, not his "great strength," seemed to lie in what may be called a boyish ingenuousness.

He was Chancellor long before I knew him, and I could no more, without the knowledge of this historical fact, have imagined he had ever been such, than have believed Sir William Curtis had been in his age and fatness a dancing-master.

There was something like fate in the production of this impression; I never was in company with Lord Erskine but some improvisatorial corruscation of his natural character diverted me, nor ever heard him in his finest effusions of eloquence, without being struck with the arch and innocent juvenility in which he expatiated, even when affectingly pathetic.

My first notion of his playful humour took its rise from an anecdote worthy of being recorded. A mutual Edinburgh friend happened to be in the House of Lords when the royal assent was to be given to a number of Bills. Erskine was sitting in all the grandeur of wig and robe, when he saw his old friend M——— below the bar, and taking out one of his own cards, he drew a little turtle on it, and writing, "Ready at seven—come," handed the card down to M———, who guessed what it meant, an invitation to dinner; for he had known the chancellor since he was an Athenian "TAM."

When I first knew his Lordship he drove about with a tiger in a gig, who knocked at the house

where he intended to call with a postman's knock. Erskine told my wife that he had long observed servants always more punctually answered knocks of that kind than any other.

Sometimes his conversation was droll, more droll than witty. One day I met him at a party where the celebrated Dr. Parr was the honoured guest. Erskine sat next to him, and somehow they got into an argument about the merits of Dryden the poet, respecting which his Lordship was not very worshipful; at last waxing earnest, he quoted Scripture in support of his opinion, affirming that Dryden had done nothing excellent but the ode of Alexander's Feast; and that, said he, "is a jewel in a sow's snout."

But it would be tedious to write of all the sparkles and scintillations of genius for which this brilliant character was distinguished, for I suppose they must be considered as flickerings of genius; certain it is that no man who was not the implicit slave of his impulses would ever have done many things which he did as matters of course. I must, however, tell you of another anecdote, which God forbid the Archbishop of Canterbury should ever commit. When he lived in Bryanstone-street, as I once happened to pass the house, the thought struck me to call: accordingly I knocked, and while waiting till the door would be opened, a trolloping

girl came to it with a tea-cup in her hand, covered with the corner of her shawl, which a puff of wind lifted and revealed—lo and behold, the cup contained about a quartern of rum. Just at that moment the ex-chancellor himself opened the door, and observing me smile, smiled too. He was without a dressing-gown and in his slippers, but he said that he was busy packing up books; however, he would see me, and invited me in.

I have frequently remarked that men who are indisputably of high endowment are often, like Lord Erskine, addicted to indulge their *wee pernicketies*. I cannot call them little *whimsies*, for they are unpremeditated, and differ from perhaps more conspicuous eccentricities in having nothing about them odd, but the circumstances in which they are shown. Dr. Parr, whom I have just mentioned, was one, for example, that did as *outré* things as Erskine, and yet they were never to me so interesting, though more laughable, merely because they seemed to me more designedly droll. I once saw the Doctor rise from table when he had got his pipe, and, because the servants had not brought him a basin of water to spit in, bring a golden chalice from the gorgeous sideboard, and place it at his feet for the purpose. Erskine would never have done such a thing, and yet how

many as queer fancies did he not indulge ! There was something I thought of vanity in the Doctor's absurdity—a desire to be observed, and a devised stratagem to accomplish that purpose.

LETTER V.

REV. EDWARD IRVING.

I DO not say there are no hypocrites in the world; I trust my own experience has taught me not to think so foolishly; but I do say that I believe no man can be very eminently remarkable in his class, who is not himself earnest and conscientious in his vagaries. In religious antics, men must either be atheists or sincere votaries. No one who reverences the DIVINE BEING could have the courage to

“ Play such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As make the angels weep,”

unless he believed the tricks holy, and as acceptable as the performance of duties.

On this principle I do not agree with many of my friends, in suspecting that the Rev. Mr. Edward

Irving did designedly invent his peculiar doctrines to attract to himself consequence and celebrity ; but I think, to use a vernacular phrase, that he was wrong in the head, and I have heard that a *post obit* examination demonstrated the fact that he must have been so. Perhaps, however, I am not very well qualified to offer any opinion on the subject ; for you know I am often guilty of thinking heterodox thoughts, and I do not expect that many will acquiesce in one of my theories, namely, that all who do not act harmoniously with the world, are more or less, according to the degree of their variance, mad. I was, indeed, wicked enough to rejoice when I heard anatomists had ascertained that the poor apostle of incredible things was really *non compos* ; for what I had seen of him would have made me regret that such a seeming good man should have been only one of those quacks who know that ninety-nine of those who walk the streets are fools, which they may prey upon with profit, while they refrain from seducing the hundredth, conscious that it may prove a failure.

There was much in the aspect of Irving, calculated to make a profound impression on the weak and mystical-minded. His very squint gave him a look of one not of the commonalty of mankind.

There was something in it not describable ; I know no better term for the intense mystery of his eyes, than genius ; and his black hair suggested terrific imaginations of one who must not be mentioned to ears polite.

That he turned those natural endowments to some account in the aims of his ambition, is probable, but the cause of his passion was not because he possessed them. The instigation by which he was influenced was in the mind, and he found the innate peculiarities of his gifts provided, to enable him to bring his mental qualities into effect ; like the dexterous operative, whose talent finds a ready agent in the cunning of his right hand.

I once heard Irving preach, and as a critic I listened, but he greatly disappointed me, and my conviction at the time was, that he could only be admired by the vulgar. His obsolete forms of expression seemed to me elaborate affectation, and I was quite disgusted to observe that there was glaring histrionic energy whenever he tried to be most in earnest. I recollect one incident which satisfied me as to his powers as a natural orator. He made an impassioned bow-wow, with gestures fierce, fist high in air, and eyes perhaps as tender as a turtle-dove, when the topic of his vehemence was as common-place, passionless ver-

bosity as a presbyterian precentor's remembering prayer.

On another occasion I dined in company with him, along with several persons of acknowledged superior intellect, and it so happened that in the same party was another gentleman, who has since become distinguished for saying common things in an odd manner. In that party Mr. Irving was, though a little stiff, gentlemanly in his remarks, and most unlike what it might have been thought an enthusiast would be. But, mark this, he was comparatively taciturn, and the other *genius* was also taciturn, both as if aware that they would be curiously noticed. Others who remarked the art of this, obvious in both, drew unfavourable inferences, possibly right ones, but I was not so struck with the seeming diffidence, as with a kind of "I won't cast my pearls before swine" air of abstraction, and I inferred from their aloofness, not a dread of being found out, but a pharisaical consciousness of superiority. This mistake I am sure is often committed. Neither Mr. Irving nor the other gentleman seemed to regard the rest of the company with the slightest apprehension of having anything to conceal, but only with a supercilious indifference, as if thanking God they were not like others around them. I have ever since been de-

cidedly of opinion that, though Irving may have manifested occasional eccentricities, he was an honest and sincere man. The ale was good, but rather too foamy, filling empty vessels with froth and wind.

LETTER VI.

ELDON.

I NEVER was in private society with Lord Eldon, and, therefore, cannot give any opinion of his social powers, or of the aspects which his mind assumes in the vicissitudes of conversation. I have only seen him on the woolsack and the bench, situations in which he must necessarily have appeared more formal than nature has made him, and less like other men than he really was. Still he seemed to be one of those whom I desired to see again, and I have often listened to his hair-splitting ingenuity with pleasure, more akin, however, to wonder than to admiration. I never could regard him as a great man, but decidedly ever as one of much worth.

His superior faculty did not manifest itself to me as an endowment to which the world applies the epithet of great; it was not at all so good as

to merit that high honour, nor so bad as to be dreaded as likely to inflict much harm ; but I am justified in considering him as a sterling character, and I think he was emphatically so : moreover an Englishman, with the characteristics peculiar to the country. Yet he had little of that frankness which is the most recognizable feature of the English, and much of that far-forecasting prudence supposed to be only indigenous in the straths of the North.

He was not eloquent ; there was always a hazy atmosphere about his most luminous ideas, causing them to seem less brilliant to others than perhaps, from the intense sincerity which he apparently felt, they were thought to be by himself ; but the dimness with which he loomed in his best speeches was a natural defect, and no more attributable to him than the beauty of a maiden to herself.

Judging from the arid level of his oratory, I suspect he was not a man of many accomplishments ; learned I dare say he was, competently, but not a scholar of deep or general erudition. That he was profoundly acquainted with the principles of law, I have always understood ; but in his knowledge of the statutes, and particularly with the legal antiquities of the constitution, I never, even I, could see much to amaze. In discriminating the distinctive peculiarities of a case, however, he

excelled all men that I ever heard attempt to analyze a moral subject ; and it was, therefore, impossible for him, by his honesty, seeing, as he saw, to advocate any policy which he perceived obviously wrong, or to defend any measure that obtuse minds might have deemed questionable ; though I think his perception was so subtile that in the worst he would have found something good.

He was the very last person I should ever have thought of making an executor, for assuredly he would have brought the heirs and legatees into some labyrinth of a lawsuit ; and yet I have never seen or heard one whom I would have preferred for an adviser ; and I am convinced that, although in the councils of his Sovereign he may seldom or never have suggested a course of policy which the Government adopted, he must yet have been one of the most influential members of the Cabinet, merely because he doubted so much, and his doubts were so plausible—no, not plausible—perhaps probable.

I speak of this eminent man as no more, for I consider him as never likely again to bias public proceedings, and as politically dead ;* but his great age, and his still occasional appearance among the Peerage, makes him an object interesting to his friends, and of anxiety to the adversaries of those

* This letter was written while Lord Eldon was still alive.

Conservative doctrines which he so manfully maintains. Nor, perhaps, is it desirable that his days should be prolonged; for, however venerable his opinions may be, the spirit of the times runs strong against them, and men will no longer be content with things as they are, but will dig, as it were, into the future for theoretical improvements. Much, doubtless, of what they expect will turn out no better than earth and rubbish, and the world would, probably, be less disturbed if they abstained from their anticipations; but they have passed beyond the control of cautious men, and Lord Eldon has survived his day. With a sigh and emotion I write this, for I consider him as the very representative of the system that is doomed soon to pass away, and history has told me that the *interregnum*, as it may be called, between an old and new frame of things is always a period of confusion and revolutionary chaos.

Perhaps you will be surprised that I should ascribe so much influence, as I seem to do, to this energetic old man, and yet not consider him a very highly endowed character; but I think him more than an ordinary person, and I have often noticed that Providence evolves its designs as much by the fortunes as by the abilities of agents.

Lord Eldon was, undoubtedly, a splendid specimen of the success which an individual might attain

under that system which is now in a state of dissolution; there was nothing about him of glare, stratagem, or machination,—such qualities as predominate in turbulent times. In whatever point of view he may be contemplated, he will always seem respectable, and, if he was a fair representative of the past age, it is impossible to deny that it evinced mankind advanced above what they were in the gorgeous circumstances of the feudal time, however much they may be inferior to what they will be in the shall-be epochs of that millennium which Radicals imagine is destined by their innovations to come to pass. Alas! they see not the wreck that will be on the ebbcd shore till the tide return.

LETTER VII.

LORD LANSDOWNE.

I AM somehow inclined to consider public characters more as the representatives of classes, or orders, than as individuals. Accordingly, in my notion of this respectable nobleman, I have less regard to his endowments than to his consistency; he stands with me at the head of consistent public men. This, perhaps, you may say does not signify a great deal; but to myself it signifies much; for I have a pleasure in thinking of consistent characters, analogous to that sense of beauty which I experience in contemplating the permanency of the mountains or the sameness of the sea. It may not be easy to say how such things delight—I only know that they do—and as uniformly as the vision of the rainbow, or the auricular revelation of the diapason.

From his first *début* while Lord Henry Petty, I became interested in him. I listened to his speech with more relish than to either Pitt or Fox, and at the conclusion, if not persuaded by what he said, I was convinced that he would develope into one of those solid characters which are the main props and pillars of a state. All he said was of a sustained elevation, not very high, probably, but much above the ordinary level, and he possessed a curious sense, as I thought then, of self-possession. I forget what the subject was on which he spoke, but I detected his consciousness of being observed by the House of Commons, by his anxiety to appear as he should have done; for in one of the pauses of his oration, if that epithet may be applied to a passionless exposition, he adjusted his cravat, thereby showing that he had all his wits about him. I remember mentioning the circumstance next day at dinner to Thelwall, who professed oratory (as if eloquence could be taught!) and he was quite shocked, for his ideas of men were of their manners rather than of their minds. Since that time his Lordship has been always an object of no common solicitude with me, and I have remarked with pleased complacency that he has become just what I thought he was likely to be—a party man, no doubt, but one with whose opinions general considerations are so mingled as to contravail those

party predilections which render greater talent nugatory.

The whole course of the Marquis of Lansdowne has been of the same tenour; sedate, temperate, becoming not only his rank, but his character. Lately I had occasion to turn over the Parliamentary proceedings for more than twenty-five years, and I was surprised (for I was not looking for that) to observe how much all his motions partook of a considerate and reflective character.

He has proposed nothing of a kind to greatly attract attention, but whatever he did seemed calculated for the exigency. I do not say that he ever attempted to represent an expedient as a matter of vital principle; but he often made things which were vital in principle seem very like expedients, and suitable to the common uses of the world. The tact of doing this is often the qualification of statesmen. Most men can appreciate the practical effect of measures, but few are aware of those esoterical influences which should not be divulged to people, yet which are of the greatest interminable consequence. I am disposed (but you will not, perhaps, agree with me) to think that Lord Lansdowne's defect is diffidence, and that he is possessed of more natural ability than he exerts—not owing to indolence, but to an imagination that others more bustling have more talent. I regard him, indeed,

as one who would be an invaluable acquisition to the Conservative side ; but he has been all his life so firm, though so temperate, a Whig, that I have no hope of ever seeing him aught else, unless he should discern a vehemence in the wheels of his party needing a drag, and then he would adhere *too* consistently to the change which he might be induced to make. In a word, I like him, though of different politics, because he does not affect, like many of the Whigs, to defer to public opinion and yet take their own way. He is not one of those rulers who think that men, fettered by their own private interests, need to be constantly watched ; but he thinks (wisely, in my opinion) that in a country like this, where property is all in all, security is as good as liberty.

“None but the safe in freedom live.”

LETTER VIII.



SIR ROBERT PEEL.

SIR ROBERT PEEL has no more genius than a slice of turnip has of the flavour of the pine-apple ; and yet he is, perhaps, one of the most respected men in all England at this time. It would be as far short of the truth to call him a man of mediocrity, as it would be absurd to compare him with Shakspeare ; though he may have committed the juvenile indiscretion of counting his digits to heroic measure more than once, when the fag of Lord Byron. In fact, there is nothing poetical about him ; his mind is as clear of nebulæ as the purest summer sky is of cloud, or the lamb of the upland of murderous intents. There is no other whom the voices of all the public would more unanimously pronounce respectable. The Conservatives, no doubt, might inflate their vociferation a

little too much, and Whigs and Radicals murmur at the close of theirs ; just as a thing that is riven with reluctance has always something useless dangling at the end of it ; still, however, all would admit that he is a Parliamentary character ornamental to the nation.

One of the curious indications of the worth and talent of this esteemed statesman is the universal similarity with which his degree of ability is appreciated. Every one admits, and probably justly, that he is a high character ; but no one whatever insists that he is a great man. There is none of that self-abandonment about him which is often peculiar to greatness, nor, indeed, of that tenacious selfishness which is as frequently the alloy of talent. He is made of refined bullion, and, if not the most precious gold, assuredly sterling. In ordinary times, when dinners are served up regularly at the regular hour, and official documents lie in order, tied together neatly with red tape, in official archives, Sir Robert Peel is your man for office ; but it would be an insult to the world to suppose that one so little imaginative and of such inexperience, whose adventures may be comprehended in a walk from Privy Gardens to St. Stephen's chapel, can be fit—

“To mount the whirlwind and direct the storm.”

He is too corporeal, perhaps too corpulent, for

such wizard-like caper. The seven volumes about Sir Walter Scott's intromissions between Castle-street and the Parliament-house of Edinburgh, and *syne* to his fantasies on Tweed side, must be as nothing* to the mind that lulls itself by thinking Sir Robert Peel able to control the "chaos come again" of this age, and hopes he will be installed Minister. But do not mistake me; I think the worthy Baronet passing good to fill a secondary situation; but for—

"Tramp, tramp, across the land we ride,
 Splash, splash, across the sea;
 Hurrah, the dead can ride apace—
 Dost fear to ride with me?"

The late Sir William Curtis dancing the Highland fling, with a philibeg and his big body, would be a decorum compared to such an apocalypse. Let him show us, while in opposition, that he is able to comprehend the rushing spirit of the age. He has already pulled in his horns, as if the very gala of Glasgow, that was to authorize him to

* This allusion to that work must not be construed to imply anything derogatory to its worth. It mainly consists of the charming letters of an excelling good man; and the narrative interwoven may be said only to give the author occasion to introduce them. As a *book* it stands in the van of all the library works of the age; and it is in that light, and not as a piece of biography, that it should be considered.

exalt them, had taught him there was a force in the stream of things which could not be stemmed.

Of the kind of the talents of Sir Robert Peel, I think as highly as any man can sincerely pretend to do; but the haste and hurry with which men's minds are impassioned must be abated, either by nature or the expedients of genius, before I should think it can be allowed that he is qualified to guide the destinies of the British empire. I do not say so in disparagement of his abilities, but to show that foolish partizans, when they clamour for his being replaced in power, do not rightly understand the symptoms of that moral cholera with which the nation is infected. Sir Robert Peel, I doubt not, might do much to strengthen the buttresses of our ancient time-honoured institutions, but we want one who has discerned the direction which the deluge has taken, and sees that the foundations of the old not only require to be repaired, but that other new bulwarks and breakwaters must be raised to render them satisfactory and efficient.

Consistency is the basis of political integrity, and Sir Robert, by showing an inflection of principle on the occasion of *the Catholic Emancipation Bill*, and on other questions, has certainly weakened that confidence in him which all the Conservatives would have voluntarily and entirely given. Any suspicion of the nature of corruption does not enter,

however, into the bosom of his most corrosive adversaries ; the very worst thought of him is, that he is apt to yield to a plausible expediency. But, even with this alloying consideration, he has lost that paramount influence which in these times might have made him all but a great man.

His style of speaking is in harmony with his character. No man in the House of Commons can *lecture* better, and a spirit of good sense pervades all he says, in unison with the respect that his personal purity deserves. But we want an orator now who can sometimes make us thrill ; for the Reform Bill has increased the audience, and it consists of a larger number of those who are more swayed by their passions and feelings than by reason. It is no longer enough now to think you are addressing that ancient Commons in Parliament assembled. You must think of the mob of the outside, and the zealots who press around the doors.

LETTER IX.

CANNING.

I FEAR you will think me paradoxical ; but I am conscientiously sincere : it would be a work to which I trust never to stoop, to say aught of a public man that I should blanch to avow to himself or to all the world, be he Whig, Tory, or Radical ; and therefore when I say of Canning that I do not think he was so superior as many others thought, believe that it is because I really think so, uninfluenced by invidia or the instigation of party spirit. Indeed, how can my opinion be affected by invidia, if my feelings are like those of other men ? for I have never had but reason to be pleased with my remembrance of his personal notice, and the principles of his politics were similar to my own.

That he was an individual highly gifted none

will deny ; but his gifts were not, I think, of the first quality. As an orator his power was commanding ; but I doubt if there be one who can recollect anything he ever uttered that would have made “Felix tremble.” In the welding of a demonstration he was far inferior to Fox, and in fancy, compared with Burke, as the milky beauty of the noon to the gorgeous conflagration of the evening. He was certainly endowed with an elegant playfulness of fancy, that seemed to show he might have acquired celebrity in literature, had fortune so willed ; but even as a poet or an author he has not produced one essay that can be justly ranked above the effusions of those on whom society bestows the epithet of clever. Men of original genius seldom produce more than one excellent work ; and Canning, neither as a statesman nor as a literary character, has done anything to merit a place in the first class.

The arena of debate was, in fact, the scene where this able orator was seen to the most advantage, and now and then he must have appeared there, to many a “country gentleman,” almost as one of those energies which Providence sends forth when it has some special purpose to perform on the destinies of mankind. But even in his most triumphant argument some who heard him must have discovered that the horizon of his views was not

extensive—no, nor expansive. He seemed to think that the forms of the British constitution were already perfect; confounding the forms with the principles;—and although the pressure from without, like that of the famous Italian iron tower, was becoming stronger and stronger, so as to threaten to crush and destroy all within, unless counteracted, he opposed Reform *in limine*, and thereby indirectly ministered to a more thorough change than was, perhaps, yet required. He never appeared to have a very clear idea of the prospective course of things; at least he always seemed to think that the currency and tendency of improvement were much slower than they are, and might be resisted by the contrivances of statesmen. He was not aware that the fountain head flowed from the beginning, and would continue as a river stream to the end. No doubt he was right in supposing that statesmen might dam up the coming deluge—for a time; but assuredly he ought to have seen, by the history of human affairs, that unless safety-sluices and flood-gates are constructed, the ever-flowing waters will burst every mound.

Canning was a political Papist; a liberal one, it is true; but still one of those who think that what is human may be so excellent as to be

virtuously prevented from being improved. He felt and represented the desire for Reformation, as a pernicious passion for change only. He saw not that there is a something in the circumstances of the age, irritating to that desire, and which, perhaps, made it stronger than was healthy; forgetting that because it might be too strong, it did not therefore follow that there was not a golden mean, which should be considered.

Were he to be estimated by his literary *jeux-d'esprit*, I suspect he would stand much lower in the opinion of his admirers than he does; and if regarded as he appeared best in Parliament, many would hesitate to honour him with the title of a great man, though few indeed would withhold the enviable and just epithet of a great orator. He was emphatically an accomplished debater, and had just so much of the statesman-mind as was requisite for that character; but he lived posterior to the time in which such a person would have loomed as a wonder; though there were many of his contemporaries who reckoned him among those luminaries which La Bruyere describes as so dazzling. In one respect, certainly, he was like them—he was a meteor; and his effects have vanished with himself.

Before I conclude, perhaps I should add that

in conversation he was much less brilliant than is commonly supposed. In the House of Commons he undoubtedly emitted scintillations, always bright, often splendid, and seemingly unstudied ; but nobody ever reported the social sparklings of Canning. Of one who had so greatly the reputation of being a wit, this is extraordinary ; but perhaps, like the flint, he required a smart concussion to bring out his latent fires.

Canning was, take him for all and all, not only an ornament to the time, but an admirable specimen of the intellects of an age in which talents and accomplishments were correctly appreciated.

LETTER X.

DR. WALCOT.

WHAT literary man in his day was more notorious than Peter Pindar? Of his history we know little, but his works show that he was endowed with a wonderful perception of the ludicrous, and a heart incapable of feeling like other men.

He began life as a surgeon and apothecary, and he made but slender proficiency in that joint profession. He then went out as a doctor to Jamaica; but by what college he was dubbed M.D. we know not. Finding little chance of quacking the creoles, he got himself into holy orders, and was of course as a clergyman despised. He then returned to England, and attempted to practise as a doctor in Truro; but so few would swallow his odious stuffs that he removed to Helstone, and finally came to London, where he certainly did acquire a topping name as a libeller. But we must change our tone.

It is mournful to think that a man who was so obviously by his writings a minion of nature, made a very trull of his genius. It is impossible

to look into his works without being sensible that he was able to delight all ages; it is equally impossible to turn, without loathing, from the criminal use he made of his powers. We never think of Walcot's splendid endowments (for such we must regard them) but with anguish,—being well aware that if a man can stoop to throw off all honourable feelings, he may soon acquire notoriety, but

“How hard it is to climb

The steep where fame's proud temple shines afar.”

Any man may be rich who can be brave enough to be dishonest with discretion ;—as any reptile who can wriggle itself into domestic privacy and inflict stings there, may be detested. Of this kind was Peter Pindar. His attempts to degrade the fatherly George the Third as a man, can never be forgiven, while there is anything like human feeling in existence ; nor could all the appliances of the King's condition have assuaged the grief he may have felt, had not nature furnished him with a breastplate invulnerable to that kind of satire which amuses the good-natured, but which often sinks deepest and rankles most incurably in the victims of its malice.

We think that Walcot was essentially malignant—one that does mischief without being aware of its venom. The asp may have thought itself

a very amiable creature when it revelled on the bosom of Cleopatra. But he was worse than to be malicious; for that implies conduct instigated by revenge, and revenge, says Lord Bacon, is “a kind of wild justice,” believing itself to have been injured.

In one respect, however, the bad distinction of Dr. Walcot was a boon conferred on the human race: for no man conscious of possessing such talent will ever again venture to put it to so base a use. The wholesome example of the contempt into which he is now spurned, will deter others from allowing their instinctive impulses to pander to the amusement of the public by unchecked licentiousness. We say this with the perfect conviction that we were prudent enough not to kick the lion while he lived.

But although it seems to us difficult to apply to Dr. Walcot any epithet which does not imply aversion, he was still human; and his patronage of Opie the painter, a friendless man of genius, is a beautiful jewel in “an Ethiop’s ear.” By that kindness to one who needed it, he has redeemed himself from much of the blame which must be awarded to him when his poetry alone is thought of.

LETTER XI.

JAMES WATT.

HAD James Watt been actuated by a good or by a bad motive when he was in search of his great improvement on Newcomen's steam engine, he would have deserved to have been classed with those who are considered the best benefactors, or the worst enemies of mankind. But he was only guided by the common incitement which directs men of genius who think miraculous thoughts, in spite of themselves,—as if they were the subjects of inspiration. He gave a new limb to man, inconceivably more powerful than his right hand.

We have heard and read much of the attainments of this man of genius, and have never ceased to be amazed at the nonsense which is uttered concerning his talents, contrasted with the justness of the estimate which the improved and intelligent have uniformly made of him. The

former speak of him as if he were the inventor of the steam-engine; but the latter know that it is of unknown antiquity; that in the reign of Charles V. a steam boat was exhibited before him at Barcelona, on the 17th June, 1543; that more than a century ago a person of the name of *Hall* did invent a tug boat of the steam species; and that the Marquis de Jouffry in 1781 constructed a steam-boat at Lyons, in France. Except indeed the ONE glorious idea of Watt, his improvement on Newcomen's engine, it cannot be said that, in the application of the power, he has in any great degree surpassed many others.

Unquestionably since his time the power of steam itself has been so amazingly augmented, that it now may be said to be only limited by the quantity of the combustibles in the whole earth. Man had armed himself with the thunderbolt by the discovery of gunpowder, and by steam he has attained the strength of a god.

It is with no disposition to disparage the inspiration of Watt's suggestion that we say this; he has few more zealous admirers; but he is treated as an impostor, when the ignorant claim for him more than the common acquirements of a man gifted with singular perspicuity of intellect. Science is not indebted to him for a wider horizon than it before enjoyed; he was,

altogether, a practical engineer, and his discovery was more of a perception than an induction.

We had the great enjoyment of knowing this modern Archimedes, and while we can bear the strongest testimony to his clear-headedness, as compared with some of the most endowed with that faculty in his time, we should demur to acknowledge that we thought him superior to most others, except in apprehension. In that, however, he was quite wonderful, and the conciseness and simplicity with which he explained his notions, would have secured him the reputation of being an extraordinary man.

We recollect with what delight and astonishment he once unfolded to us a method that he supposed the ancients practised in moving great weights. We mentioned to him having seen a vast Parian marble altar of Apollo, in the island of Delos, and expressed our wonder how it had been brought there, as it was a cube, the most difficult of all forms to move. "Oh!" said Watt, "quite easily; they had probably a vessel filled with sand at Paros, and moved up the block on rollers, on an inclined plane of earth, till it was unbound; and then they, in all likelihood, dug out the sand around it, during which operation it would settle down, and the remaining sand become dunnage." It seemed to us at the time,

and has ever done since, that this idea was perfect*; we never heard a process so completely described in so few words. It was in a sentence, and ours is opaque compared to his lucid gem.

It was in this respect that Watt was superior; and instead of his son and the Greenock folk building for his monument a fantastic edifice that will not endure so long as their steeple, it would have been more to the purpose had they procured a memoir of him, and published it, in which justice could have been done to the acuteness of his perception; and only a contemporary can do this; for when the generation is removed to whom he was known, the desideratum can never be supplied.

* What method did the French Engineers resort to in shipping the obelisk which they brought from Egypt?

LETTER XII.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE RICHARD
BRINSLEY SHERIDAN.

ACTORS and singers are the most celebrated personages of their day ; next to them popular authors in popular literature : perhaps orators may sometimes be deemed superior to the best of them, but not always. To these circumstances we should ascribe, probably, the large space which the distinguished man of whom we have now to speak occupied in public consideration. At all events we do not think that he deserved the great celebrity to which he attained in his own day.

Sheridan was not, indeed, an actor, but he was a theatrical author, as it was supposed, of several dramas which have first-rate merit :— we say supposed ; for although he was certainly, able to have written the pieces ascribed to him

it has been doubted if he ever did more than flower and spangle the tissue of another's loom. Be this, however, as it may, the success of the different pieces which he enjoyed the credit of having produced would have made the fame of any ordinary man;—he was therefore famous by the influence of the stage alone in his time.

But besides the notoriety thence arising, his wife was a distinguished cantatrice, moreover very beautiful, and greatly renowned in the play-going world. In consequence, she was undoubtedly a feather in his cap, and his connexion with her unquestionably enhanced his own rights to distinction.

The tinsel of the stage glitters like gold, and the flash of rosin “flares up” as tremendous as the thunderbolts of Jove: so was it with the reputation of Sheridan, arising from his theatrical and conjugal connexion: it was splendid in his time; but if he had possessed no other claim to renown than what he derives from these two causes, he must have been to posterity as a far-off meteoric star.

But Sheridan was, however, a wit;—a coarse one, it may be, and, like all wits, he was endowed with a brilliant shrewdness; indeed, as a wit alone he must have been a sparkling companion

—to such a degree as to have attracted the admiration of his contemporaries :—but still there is no permanent renown attached to any social quality.

Indeed, had he not proved himself as a first class orator in Parliament, it might have been questioned if he was so great a man as in his own time he was thought to be. His displays, however, as a speaker, left no doubt on the subject ; and accordingly, for eloquence, and the light of perception which belongs to that high quality, he will ever be spoken of as an eminent man, though posterity will necessarily be only the echo of those who lived with him.

Every thing about Sheridan marked him out only as a man of his time ; for except as a debater of themes suggested by others, he is entitled to no particular celebrity. We do not think that, with all his shrewdness and perception, he was calculated to acquire distinction by his actions. He was, in fact, less a man than a fashion. None who enjoyed so much personal influence ever did less for the world ; none possessed of equal talents and advantages ever established such doubtful claims on the gratitude of his country. His abilities were rather those of a critic than an author ; and so those now

think who expected, from his debut as a senator, that a statesman would be unfolded, who would build for himself an ever-during monument inscribed by the gratitude of his compatriots.

LETTER XIII.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE WILLIAM
WYNDHAM.

THERE was much in the character of Wyndham agreeable to our notions of what constitutes an eminent man. His intrepidity had in it something heroic ; for it was not obtrusive, yet always bold and determined : there was also a nationality in his mode of thinking and acting which has seldom been surpassed. He was a true English gentleman,—frank, firm, and resolute. Had he been a native of any country whatever, his endowments were such that he would have been in all distinguished as one like an Englishman. He was not a star of the most splendid magnitude ; but he was always a star ; and one of great lustre and purity. His dispositions were sublimated with a feeling allied to the spirit of ancient chivalry ; and his manners partook naturally of that gracious sense of honour which

it was the study of the real knights of romance to elevate into a virtue. It was a very favorable indication of the spirit of his age, that he was admired, and honourably employed in the public affairs of his country.

Of Wyndham's acquirements we cannot speak of our own knowledge ; doubtless, they were at least equal to those of most men of his station ; but it is the natural qualities of Mr. Wyndham that constitute the basis of his right to the applause and respect of posterity. Nor will it be forgotten, as a proof of the elevated caste to which he belongs, that his personal friends were all men of whom his country is proud. His soul lived, it may be said, in the highest regions of intellect ; and it could not have sustained itself there had it not possessed a natural affinity for the noble and magnanimous.

No epithet is too strong for Wyndham's general merits ; it is only when considered as a man of genius, that any hesitation can arise as to the niche which he should occupy in the temple of Fame. As an accomplished man, he stands very eminent indeed, and those who had opportunities of knowing his literary attainments, describe them as far above what were common. As an orator (and it is in that capacity he is to be regarded as a man of genius) he is entitled to

a very high place in the second class. Even his metaphysical finesse was conducive to his influence as a public speaker ; for it often led him to illustrations which excited the attention of the shrewdest by their aptness. There was, indeed, an air and feeling of philosophical discernment in many of his most cursory remarks, far above those of men perhaps better fitted for the routine of business. It was fortunate for the sacred and venerable things of the time in which he lived, that a man of such a temperament appeared in the ranks of those who sought to defend the time-honoured institutions of society.

Perhaps all history furnishes nothing finer and more characteristic of an individual and of a nation than an anecdote of this distinguished man. He was major of the Norfolk militia ; and when the corps was about to be marched into Suffolk, an order was issued by the commander, that the usual bounty should not be paid till the regiment had actually quitted Norfolk. Wyndham opposed this innovation, but was obliged to submit. The men, as he had foreseen, were deeply discontented ; and when, in the absence of the colonel, he gave the command to march, they openly mutinied, and grounded their arms. The firmness of his manner, however, disconcerted some of them, and

they were about to resume their duty, when one of the privates, with the frank courage of his country, stepped forward and reproached them for their pusillanimity.

Wyndham's presence of mind was not shaken ; he seized with his own hand this violator of discipline, and having procured assistance, lodged him in the guard-house.

The populace rose ; but still he was undaunted ; nevertheless a rescue was apprehended, and Wyndham in consequence resolved to continue with the prisoner during the night.

At four o'clock in the morning the rioters attacked the guard-house, and demanded the liberation of the prisoner. Wyndham presented himself at the door, with his sword drawn. " While I have life," said he, " I will defend this spot, and the prisoner shall not be suffered to escape."

The mob and the insubordinate soldiers pressed forward to the rescue ; but the prisoner himself appeared, and with that greatness of mind, which is indigenous in all ranks of the English nation, he entreated them to desist. " Do not," said he, " offer violence to Major Wyndham ; he is the best of men. If you succeed in rescuing me, I will again surrender myself."

The mob retreated, appeased, and the regi-

ment was mustered and marched to its destination. It is impossible, we think, to read a transaction of this kind without feeling the blood thrill, and the spirit glow.

The anecdote is chiefly introduced to furnish a palpable idea of Wyndham's mind. His whole character evinces that magnanimity was inherent in it. His right feeling towards a lady whom he wished to marry, is less worldly, but still as noble, and the influence of himself on another as obvious ; as if greatness begat greatness. She made him the confidant of her attachment to another ; and with that genuine self-sacrifice which is the test of sincere love and goodness, he exerted himself to facilitate her union with his rival, a clergyman ; and after the latter's death, Wyndham a second time showed that his affection and esteem were not abated, by procuring the means of stipulating with the clergyman who succeeded to the living, to grant a portion of the stipend to the widow.

It is the occasional appearance of such men as Wyndham that propagates benevolence.

LETTER XIV.

FRANCIS HORNER.

MANY things are regarded with awe and diffidence, merely from the occasional arrogance of dogmatism, bred in solitary rumination, and promulgated with an oracular air and tone. Characters and works which the world respects exceedingly, do not inspire all with the same feelings of deference. For our own parts, without being bigoted to our opinions, we yet grasp them strongly; still, however, believing that others who think differently may have been as solicitous to form right notions, as we have been ourselves.

Our sentiments with respect to Horner are of the kind to which we allude; we decidedly differ from his friends in the estimate which we have formed of his talents.

In the logical development of a subject, we acknowledge he displayed great ability. He was not perhaps a very good speaker, but he

was undoubtedly an acute reasoner ; and no man could unfold inferences and inductions from his premises more perspicuously than he did at all times, whether as an orator or as a critic.

But it was in the assumption of premises, that we think Horner was not only apt to be erroneous, but even a dangerous man. The nation, in our opinion, still feels and will long rue, his errors and heresies on the bullion question.

Had he lived, he might possibly have renounced his theories on that subject ; but it is not of such possibilities we have to speak ; we must consider him as he lived and as he died ; and our strictures do not refer to what he might have become, but what he really was.

Once for all, we admit, what indeed cannot be denied, that he was a man of talent ; but as a speaker we do not think he was a great orator. He had few popular graces, little imagination, and there was a muzziness, as the painters call it, in his tones, which might beget respect, but was not calculated to ensure confidence. His air and manner savoured more of the study than the forum ; but in what he said he was accurate and forcible ; leaving little more to be desired by his auditors than what he stated—the premises he assumes being admitted. He was therefore, we do affirm and believe, one of that sort of

men who have proper intellectual instruments for dissection, but who form previous theories, and then seek for evidence to support their theories, rather than for truth. But Horner himself conceived always that he was searching for truth.

Nothing, we think, can more clearly illustrate our opinion of this respectable demi-intellect than his fatal assumption that paper was intended to represent bullion or coin ; and that the depression of the former was the consequence of issuing more of it than there was bullion in hand to meet it. This was a plausible misconception ; it arose from the error of supposing that paper represented only gold ; whereas the daily experiences of business prove that it does not represent gold, but all other desirables ; and that there can never be an excessive issue of paper while the means exist opposite to it of procuring *desirables* of the same marketable value which it bears.

We do not say that Horner was to blame for the inference which other ingenious men have since drawn from his notions ; but we do think that the subsequent excessive rankness of the banking system may be ascribed to his notion that notes should represent coin in the coffers of those who issue the notes ; whereas every practical man, who can think at all, knows that a banker issues against his means generally, and not against

treasure. The desideratum is to make bankers hold stock equal to the amount of their notes, and that this stock should be applied to pay their notes, in the first place, whenever they are necessitated to become bankrupts. Gold, in a commercial country, is a fluctuating commodity, like every other, and it would be only more insane to oblige the Bank of England to pay in sugar or salmon instead of gold ; the difference would be in degree only, not in principle.

LETTER XV.

 BYRON.

THE lyre of Lord Byron was not a monochord,—he had two strings to his bow, Satire and Sentiment. He was, certainly, as far as popularity is a test of merit, the finest literary genius which appeared during the Regency and Reign of George IV. We doubt, however, if posterity will think so much of him,—though it must and will think highly of much that he has done.

It is an invidious task, in some degree, that we propose to ourselves, with respect to the merits of this young nobleman ; for although in quantity he may be ranked with the most voluminous poets, he died nevertheless a young man ; indeed, estimating him by his years and the mass of his works, there is no bard equal to him.

It is, however, of the quality of his works we intend to speak ; and if his popularity be not so excessive now as it has been, due allowance should be made for the public attention being attracted to new objects ; in addition to that more accurate estimate of his powers, which time and consideration enable his readers to make.

A heavy deduction must be made from the amount of his fame, on account of two influential circumstances. First—he was a young peer, who, when a minor, had been rather sneeringly treated by the most celebrated Review of the time. The article was superlatively amusing, and procured for the subject of it a laughable notoriety, which, to those who knew his temperament, and to those who suspected it, was really very like renown. It made him known, and, it seems, stung him to the quick, as was expected; and he retaliated, in a satire not more just, by which almost every literary man felt that he was an enemy. These two causes would, with the tenth part of his talents, have made him a distinguished man.

Then he went on his travels into a region comparatively little known; but instead of attempting to load the shelves of libraries, like his friend Hobhouse, with thick squab quartos, he published an effusion of moral bile, under the odd name of a "*Romaunt*," by which he was at once elevated,—like a brimstone field-preacher on a barrel-head, or like patriots and mountebanks on a stage. There was no merit in all this : to other circumstances than merit he was indebted for his distinction.

Publicity was mistaken for fame, and the un-

thinking, who are ever of the majority, seeing him conspicuous, and confounding notoriety with celebrity, shouted that he was a great man ;—just as in the same period the Spa-fields mob shouted that one Hunt was a star ; and as an Irish faction at present halloo another demagogue into still higher celebrity.

Being notorious, Byron married : his domestic condition interested the people, and an occurrence, which at any time respecting any man of rank would have excited curiosity, added a new topic to the old talk about him. There was no merit in that.

But he went to Greece just when he began to wane, when that celebrated land was awakening ; and although many believed his sympathy for the Greeks was mere *fudge*, his interference had the effect of still keeping him uneclipsed to the public. He had not however been long in Greece till he departed this life. Surely there was no merit in thus dying.

His clay was brought home : the foolish keepers of Westminster Abbey refused to let it be deposited there, and it was sent off to the country, where it was “ quietly inurned.” In fact, if it be considered how many incidents tended to keep the name of Lord Byron in the mouths of the public, there is no saying how much

should be deducted from his fame, or rather from his popularity.

Nevertheless, after all we have now said, we are inclined to rank Byron highly. His verse, particularly when he rhymes, is often supremely sweet and musical; and he snatches occasional gleams of observation truly Shakspearean. But we cannot away with the rusty-iron-hoop jarring of much of his blank verse, and the tooth-ache groaning of his misanthropy. Though all the muses had the cholic, and Apollo the cholera, there could not be more ado on Parnassus, than he makes about the relishlessness of this world.

He was indeed a poetical Spagnoletti; he shows us, too often, the human being skinless, with all his muscles palpitating, shuddering, bleeding, convulsed, and bare; forgetting that spasmodic grasps do not indicate strength. He gratifies malevolence by sarcasm that may provoke laughter, but which most men endeavour to suppress and restrain, even at the hazard of being deemed less intellectual. Again, however, we say that Byron was a great Poet; but posterity will determine that his rank was not so high as many of his contemporary admirers imagine.

LETTER XVI.

HUME.

JOSEPH HUME is one of those busy bodies who think notoriety fame. He has no tact, and is intrusive over-much, but withal a well meaning honest man. I am not acquainted with his acquirements, but I am persuaded they are not great, and his grasp of mind is very small. He has long since attained the summit of his popularity. Even when at his greatest elevation, he was a luminary as much indebted, for apparent magnitude, to the haze in the horizon, as to his own innate splendour.

Mr. Hume, somehow, necessarily obliges those to appear invidious who undertake to write about him; because, from his bustling, he occupies more space in the public eye than naturally belongs to him, and also a more conspicuous location,—of which he has possessed himself rather by the unconscious

forwardness of a natural impulse to be meddling, than by the display of any talent. When he first got himself into Parliament it was as one of the Duke of Cumberland's myrmidons; but he soon saw that the decorum expected from a make-weight Tory would not gratify his impatience for distinction such as he coveted. Under the delusion that to be talked of among "the great unwashed" is renown, he accordingly turned patriot, and imagines now that he is a greater man, because he serves a mob instead of a Prince.

In my conscience, though I do think Mr. Hume is still actuated by the same motives with which he made his *debut* in public life, I trust to be always preserved from committing the injustice of supposing him guilty of seeking any sordid reward, or less than the celebrity of those who do service to their country. What he can do, he does; but he has not the gift of seeing himself as others see him.

While I acquit him most entirely of having any other object in view than the light of the beacon that guides all public men, I cannot but regard the way by which he proceeds towards it as an indication of the character of his mind. He has never once seemed aware, that only works or deeds constitute the monuments of the

truly famous, and inspire the applause of those whose applause is the hire of beneficent ambition; but has addressed himself to gain the good will of that class, numerous in all nations, who think that the glory of empires, and the business of rulers, ought to be in looking after candle-ends and cheese-parings.

I do not in any way whatever object to the predominance which Mr. Hume, according to the prompting of his nature, gives to economy, in its saving sense, over all the other duties of Government; for I am sensible and convinced that there necessarily is much waste and prodigality in all state operations. But I do not like to see economy brought forward on all occasions, in the way he does; because I cannot conceive that men whose actions are all before the public, do not see that their own interests will be served by acting as Mr. Hume contends they should, though they may not discern that the specific measures which he recommends are better than those which they themselves prefer. Statesmen, indeed all men, differ in opinion; but who is to determine which is right or wrong? Posterity! posterity that reaps the fruit of what they sow.

Mr. Hume is essentially erroneous,—I do not say wickedly so, because the narrowness of his

mind is, probably, the cause,—in ascribing, as he too often does, unworthy motives to those who do not worship his *save-all* idols. No man that is not naturally a criminal is ever, in public trusts, less awake than another to his duties ; and I cannot endure to hear even those whom I would oppose “to the knife” accused of deliberate corruption. It is quite enough to know that human nature is so constituted, that men’s reasons will often justify measures which are deleterious ; to be corrupt is to practise sinister modes of action, of a tendency different from that which is professed. Are such practices common among British statesmen ? Alas ! if it be so, where among all the nations of all mankind shall we find a more honorable class than the subaltern servants of the British Government. Common sense blushes at the chattering of the fool who says that men in authority are baser than these. Mr. Hume would do only bare justice if he could think that those whom he points to as corrupt and delinquent, are but mistaken, and acquit them of intentional wrong. By doing so he could likewise do much more good, even in his own small way. He would not make men, as honest as himself, meet his implications with indignation, and refuse to take the best advice, merely because they are

human beings, and cannot bear, when they believe they are doing as well as they can, to hear it suspected that they have either too much thrift for themselves, or too little for their country. Mr. Hume, with total unconsciousness of the effect of his public conduct, has done more than any other individual in the history of Great Britain, to cause the million to ascribe malpractices to that class who have established her liberties.

I say nothing of his oratory ; except that, as a matter of taste, it is abominable—about as dignified and eloquent as the garrulous croaking of a chandler over his counter.

LETTER XVII.

WELLINGTON.

PERHAPS I should not attempt to say what I think of WELLINGTON. His achievements before the world need no blazon ; and what man may presume unblamed to estimate his worth ? Who, indeed, may penetrate the recesses of the heart even of the basest ? And shall those who are conscious of their own insignificance dare to arraign a special agent of Almighty God ?

Eulogy and panegyric seem to me a profanation when I think of such a man ; and I would as soon deem myself able to imagine an object of sight more glorious than the sun, than a superior to this instrument that the heavens, in according to the system of the world, have manifested as a mortal man.

As a man, he has, no doubt, his infirmities ; but I never look upon him as such. All his human dross and frailties are for those who

revel on what is of the earth, like “the yellow and abhorred worms” of the grave. I only delight to contemplate that celestial nature with which he was endowed, to promote the ordained progression of the world, and to marshal the procession and pageantries of destiny towards their sublime consummation.

If you regard him more in his *human* character than I do, you must nevertheless not consider *me* as extravagant. I would shut my eyes to any spots that might be seen on his disc, even were his effulgency less dazzling; for it is not as a mere man that I deem him illustrious: I reverence him as I do some phenomenon of the earthquake or volcano, whereby the power of creation is made visible, and destruction ministers to beauty. Seriously I have no common pleasure in saying this, feeling, as I do, that it is disinterested; for with all the abundance of his prosperity, there is nothing in his power to do that could increase the gratitude which is due to him from me, and from all men.

History may exult in recording Wellington’s victories, and his country proudly erect cenotaphs to his fame; but that purity of the sense of duty, that sun-like openness of dealing, that ray-like straight-forwardness of intent, and that diamond-like firmness of mind, can only be com-

memorated in heaven. Others have as nobly contested famous battles, and won the renown of heroes ; but who has so taught mankind that duty implies responsibility to heaven ?

The public career of Wellington seems to have been designed to furnish illustrations to the doctrines and feelings which dictated those immortal dispatches, which do him ten times more honour than could have been gained at countless Waterloos. They prove that Providence has made from the beginning a covenant with men, that only what is right shall prosper, and has sent him to verify, by his adherence to the covenant, its everlasting truth. In his acts, considered as prompted by his feelings, there has been a new apocalypse ; and no man, after the overthrow of Napoleon, who hears of that event, will without dread think, that by power and stratagem, numbers or valour, he may gain what is not righteous. Heaven, in building the pyramids of British greatness, that mighty work of many ages, seems to have been only constructing a pedestal for this moral colossus, that it might be seen over all the earth. Had I to speak but of him as a soldier and a conqueror, my vocabulary might not be beggared. The recent publication of his dispatches, however, has opened to me a view of human nature, such

as I could only imagine in a poetical dream. I can only think of them, coming in sequence to his triumphs,—(“not to speak it profanely”)—as of that still small voice that was heard on the mountain, after the earthquake had ceased and the thunders had rolled away. The opulent may pile Pelion on Ossa for his monument; but the men of all nations should subscribe as brethren to publish a golden impression of those pages in which Wellington has demonstrated that THE RIGHT alone secures the favour of God. The pious, before THE DUKE, thought awfully that it might be so; but the great proof was reserved for the destiny of Wellington. The world only wants now a revelation, avouched by the miracles of high actions, that the disclosure of those things and thoughts of which mankind are ashamed, is the only effectual check on sin that is needed, to complete the efficacy of Christianity.

I hope what I have written will not be thought raving; for I should be grieved to imagine that sincere admiration could be construed into anything of an inferior bearing. All my own insignificant life I have ever thought, that only plain dealing, and the publication of delinquencies, were necessary to the full development of the humane influence of Christianity in the heart; and I do think the Duke of Wellington has

done more to display the virtue of the former than any man I have ever heard of. Nor do I say this with common feeling ; for while a mere playing child I was instinctively sensible of its value. The Duke has the merit of showing, that direct dealing, whenever *bona fide*, is what the world, both in public and private, requires to insure confidence. Who, indeed, but one beyond the bondage of bedlam, will be faithful when he is not trusted ? and who that is trusted, but a natural rogue, will stoop to deceive ?

LETTER XVIII.

SIR FRANCIS BURDETT.

I DO not say that consistency is political integrity; but that it is the basis of the virtue, I do think. I may be wrong, but, nevertheless, *that* is my opinion. Nor can I conceive men would ever bestow confidence on any public character in which they did not believe it existed, and firmly too. The history and latter treatment of Sir Francis Burdett, illustrates my notions of consistency.

I very well remember, when a green-horn, being one of those who looked on the honourable baronet as little better than a heretic, for entertaining such heterodox opinions as he then openly professed, and still does not quite confide only to his pillow; but then I had taken the constitution of the country upon the report of older men, and was, in truth, as ignorant of its nature as a papist is of common sense. A speech

of his at Brentford had, however, the effect of inducing me to think, that there must be some criterion of political capacity, and that by it the privileges of all citizens must be regulated. I could never allow that popular approbation, according to the Whigs, could be the criterion,—for it implies that the majority, “the mixed multitude,” are entitled to dictate to the enlightened few;—and I searched long and curiously to find what ought to be the measure of power. I was sure Sir Francis was not right, and that the Tory doctrine of adhering to abstract principles, though not wrong, was not the thing which should be.

Being thus excited, and calling to mind that British society was the progeny of the feudal system, my quest took the direction of antiquity; till at length I was convinced that property, among us, still regulated the distribution of power. I saw that ability would naturally regulate, but for the entail laws, the acquisition of property; but that, till property was acquired, the wisest of men must remain cipherless. By the way, I have, among my papers, an account I drew up full thirty years ago, relative to this very point, and I will look it out and send it you. If I am not mistaken, it will give you a clearer idea of my kind of Conservatism than all I have ever said.

When I had determined for myself, that pro-

erty was the natural qualification of power, Sir Francis rose in my esteem with a bound; for I could not imagine that a person of his discernment might be ignorant of the principle I had elicited, or could propose to give to those who had no property as much power, suffrage, and influence, as to those who had a great deal. A red-hot youth at the time, I proposed to Lord Henry Petty, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, a mode of enlarging the liberties of the subject, by raising a revenue from the issue in the country of elective charters, similar in principle to a freeman's when he takes up his livery in London. I mention this circumstance to shew that my plan was not a thing of yesterday. I rejoice, indeed, exceedingly to observe, that Sir Francis, in his old and wiser days, is of my way of thinking. That he has always thought so, I do not doubt; but when he was a candidate for Middlesex, I did think he was all for universal suffrage; conceiving men were naturally alike; though Nature shews, by bestowing different strengths and capacities, that she is opposed to universal suffrage.

I think now very highly of the consistent baronet, and I want expressions adequate to convey my opinion of those Westminster electors who, for his consistency, have deserted him.

“They have gone themselves,” to use a magnificent expression of Burke, “beyond Aurora and the Ganges,” and looked back to the mountain afar behind, on which he has always stood; reviling him as if he had retreated to that everlasting station:—for everlasting it is, and the hills shall be crushed into sand by the tread of Time, before property ceases to be the political standard of ability.

As property constitutes the natural basis of power, ability, where power is unrestricted by extensive laws, will, in proportion to its degree, divide the possessions. Privileges ought, therefore, naturally to be distributed in proportion to the possessions; and, that power and ability may be united, property should be released from all exclusive laws and limitations of inheritance. But as there are two kinds of property, the one local and permanent, the other floating and variable, the possessors of the one kind should be distinguished from those of the other kind. I ought here to add, that it was to give political influence to the monied interest that I proposed to the Marquis of Lansdowne the issuing of county elective charters.

The following is the paper alluded to in the foregoing letter :

PROPERTY.

I. Under the feudal system, in proportion to the opulence of a man's estate were his privileges and authorities.

II. The dukes, or lords palatine, enjoyed sovereign powers. They coined, enacted laws, levied taxes, raised troops, and exercised the prerogatives of life and death. The king's writs did not run within the bounds of their territories ; they could remove from his courts the suits of their vassals ; and they might demand back all criminals who had fled from their authority.

III. Earls of counties, and of those towns which were counties within themselves, judged of all civil deeds, and determined concerning all crimes, except the pleas of the crown ; and when no appeal was carried to the sovereign, their own officers executed their decisions.

IV. Viscounts were originally the deputies of earls.

V. Barons possessed a jurisdiction similar to that of the earls ; but it was confined within the limits of their own domains.

VI. Tenantry holding lands on the tenure of providing for the army of the kingdom the service of more than one knight or soldier in full armour, exercised an authority similar in many

respects to a modern justice of the peace ; and those who were bound to furnish only one knight also enjoyed a degree of manorial jurisdiction. Even vassals who held but the eighth part of a knight's service of land, were not without a portion of juridical power.

VII. An estate of two hundred fees furnished two hundred knights. Fees were divided into eight fractions or members ; but often the fee was subdivided into many smaller parts. Hence the origin of the Scottish bonnet lairds, and the English forty shilling freeholders.

VIII. The Christian clergy succeeded to the rights of the priests of the nations which destroyed the Roman empire ; but it was not till after the fiefs had become perpetual that they appeared in the national councils as barons. It was the Bishops only who sat in consequence of their spiritual functions. The abbots were admitted into the parliament only by their territorial rights.

IX. In England under the Saxon government several towns enjoyed extensive privileges, and in Scotland burghers were of greater antiquity in Parliament than knights of the shire.

LETTER XIX.

LORD STANLEY.

THERE is a kind of characters with which, one is apt to fancy, a very little knowledge is sufficient to make one well acquainted. Of this kind, with me, is Lord Stanley. I know nothing of him personally ; I am only conscious of having seen him once, thirteen years ago, in a Committee of the House of Commons ; and yet I think, by his speeches, that I am not in utter darkness as to what he really is. It may be imagination which influences me ; and I would allow that it does so, were I not assured, by experience in other instances, of the probability of my being right in this conjecture.

That his Lordship is highly endowed, will not be disputed ; it may, however, be doubted if he be what is called a man of genius. Yet in his orations there is a clearness of apprehension almost uniformly displayed, which, in the

profession of a statesman, is not much, if at all, lower than genius. What I like about him is a straightforward way of going to his purpose, which reminds me of the glorious peculiarity of the first man of the age—the Duke of Wellington. I would as soon think of doing an impossible thing, as of arguing with Lord Stanley in the hope of turning him from any topic on which he had delivered an opinion. It is not because I think him obstinate, but because I think he is conscientious in forming his decisions, and that when he thinks himself right, he will not swerve from what he has inferred and concluded. I do not say that he is all which a great statesman should be ;—but in an age when men seem to be too flexible, a man of candid firmness is not far from being a great man.

I can say nothing whatever of Lord Stanley's manner in debate ; but I fear he may at times be a little too contemptuous, especially when he does not feel quite so much veneration for his antagonists as they perhaps do for themselves. He has, however, that merit as a speaker which is above all praise ;—no one can ever mistake his meaning, nor does he ever confuse and confound himself in theoretical mists or mysteries.

It is well, when I think of this intrepid statesman, that I have not to eat in my words, with

respect to consistency being the basis of political integrity. I only, mark me, said it was the basis, not the whole thing itself; for if Lord Stanley were to appear to have changed his mind from that which he has previously thought, I would be perplexed; so much am I persuaded he would give strong reasons for the change. Indeed, when I think of him, with respect to this, I wish there was some way of not considering consistency of so vital a quality as most people do. Is there not something like as if a man opposed himself to Providence, when he adheres, in altered circumstances, to previous opinions? Sir Robert Peel, I contritely ask *your* pardon for thinking, that in the Catholic Emancipation measure you were more regulated by motives of expediency, than by a conscientious conviction of the necessity of granting it.

Lord Stanley has the good-fortune of having been the instrument of announcing to the world the most magnanimous resolution in the transactions of all mankind since the beginning of time:—THE INCAPACITY OF THE BRITISH TO HOLD SLAVES, AND PAYMENT FOR DEPRIVING THE OWNERS OF THEIR PROPERTY. I may be wrong in the estimate I make of this sublime act; but all things hitherto dreamed of glory fade to me in comparison. Victories,—yea,

Marathon and Bannockburn, and the blaze of Moscow burning,—are as the stars in the mid-day noon, when compared with that first advent of the millennium.

By the by, I must tell you a curious anecdote respecting Lord Stanley. While *he* was yet a very young man, I was sitting with a shrewd old member of Parliament, lamenting, even in Canning's presence, on the prospects of the country, and the dying off of her great men. "But," said he, "I do not yet despair; for her strength seems destined to be renewed: I never see Stanley but as the ark of the covenant, that will be kept, if we only will be true to the principles we profess."

This would have been a compliment at the time, had it been said to Stanley himself; and it implies no ordinary sagacity, that, after more than a dozen years, it should still be an assurance that may be relied on. The fact is, that if men of birth and influence could only conceive with what interest they are regarded by those who have patriotic hearts, they would enjoy a motive to be renowned, which the humbler born cannot know, nor perhaps feel.

LETTER XX.

SOUTHEY.

IN one point of view there is not a more respectable literary man of the age than Mr. Southey. All he does is of a superior quality; and though it will not be admitted that, in point of genius, he belongs to the first class, every one will at once place him high in the second. I do not think *now* that he has lessened the worth of his merits, by the acerbity with which he sometimes *did* allow himself to speak of other candidates for literary distinctions. I even think he was actuated by no detractive spirit, because they were rivals. But I will ever regret, for the general literary character, that a man, himself so meritorious, should, in unguarded moments, have allowed himself to judge of others as if he saw into their bosoms like a God. Arrogance of this kind is probably always sinful; and in those who profess to be conscious of being the rights of the world, it can never be otherwise than

offensive to such as properly feel the weakness of human nature. I am averse to believe that any one consciously tries unprovoked to vex another; and I attribute it to a mistaken sense of duty, when men write of each other as Mr. Southey allowed himself to write of Lord Byron. But I say this with reservation. Men will, and it is natural to them, resent and revenge insults and injuries; and perhaps his Lordship may have given cause not to be very tenderly handled by Mr. Southey, or to be made much of—like Caliban. No one was more likely than his Lordship to say biting things in a pleasant manner; and it was not required, in the recluse life of the laureate, that he should see his armour was well tempered.

But it is a vice of the time; men do and say such things as critics, that the most brazen brave of them would not dare to whisper, in their own persons, even to an image on a head stone. Would it were by law established that there shall be no anonymous writing! what comfort it would give to the skinless! and how it would muzzle cowards and poltroons! It is true that the deeply skilled individual in human nature, Pitt, has enabled the aggrieved and libelled by pains to find out his adversary; but to do so requires a process of law; and it is not agreeable to have ones foot long tingling to

admonish the sitting part of a reviewer; nor is it always consistent with the graceful nature of the gentle sex, to give a box on the ears to a right honourable, whose great strength may happen to be in lying, or whose predilection to serve the public may prompt him to be an executioner of such subjects as have not had a trial.

But do not mistake me: I by no means think or would insinuate that Mr. Southey is guilty, as a critic, of saying things of books which he would be afraid to say to the authors in private society; for, in fact, I do not remember any one critical interlocutor particularly that he has ever pronounced. But he is known to be a critic, and can be none the worse of knowing that some men may adopt the motto of Scotland.

Of Mr. Southey's powers and style I am a great admirer. When he is in earnest I think he often attains great beauty, with a degree of perspicuity that is often better than beauty. I am not, however, very obstinate in thinking he ought ever to write poetry;—and yet he has written much, and much of it very good. But, as Burns well says,—“folks must do something for their bread.” Nevertheless, I do not think Southey is at all so good a poet as a prosier. Still, heads and tails of his thoughts often mingle in my mind, and if he do not melt the heart, he is a dangerous one with the imagination.

His verse never disturbed in me any feeling ; but he has often troubled me with many fancies.

Mr. Southey can afford to have his faults spoken of. As I once heard a gallant captain of a man-of-war say to a *matron*, “ Madam, your arms are so beautifully plump, that I could have the heart to nip them ;” so I have a sort of enjoyment in molesting this very excellent person. His foibles, if his intimate friends know of any he has now, are quite unknown to me, and have been long unheard of by ears once open enough to the weaknesses of the celebrated. Nor is it to detract from his acknowledged superiority that I say, few acquire distinction so early, and preserve so eminent a reputation for so great a length of time. Of late years he has not added, it may be, to the elevation upon which all men concurred in placing the statue of his talents ; but, assuredly, he has done nothing to lower it. Perhaps, on the contrary, he has, like the barrows of the famed, become seemingly more enlarged by age. Though I know nothing of his personal worth, or of his habits, I have yet gratification in thinking, that I should have heard enough of both, had they not been such as we ought always to find in connexion with such genius and industry.

REVIEW
OF THE
REGENCY AND REIGN
OF
GEORGE THE FOURTH.

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CHAPTER I.—ANNO 1816.

EVENTS partake of the characteristics of those persons with whom they are associated, even when their relation to those persons is only synchronical. This was particularly the case with the events which happened during the regency and reign of George the Fourth.

On the 1st February 1816, Parliament assembled, and the topics of the Speech delivered by commission from the Throne were such as the British people expected. The splendid termination of the war, and the general exertions of the empire, were adverted to with a just moderation, which augmented their glory. Perhaps no epoch in the national history was more

magnificent, and certainly none has existed in which the conduct of the nation merited more illustrious commendation. The address, that was carried unanimously in the House of Peers, was worthy of the great occasion ; nor was the general sentiment of the House of Commons less honourable, though the unanimity of the address from that body was disturbed by an attempt to move, what might fairly be deemed a factious amendment.

Afterwards some of the orators of that House were so injudicious as to attack the establishment of the army in France, which had been left there to deter her from aggressions ; while others made pitiful complaints of the allies having exacted from France the pecuniary penalty which had been so justly imposed upon her, for having tolerated the perfidy of that faction which displayed its disregard of the peace of the world, by its insane attachment to Napoleon.

The people, however, regarded such mawkish benevolence with the contempt it deserved. They felt the enormous evils which France had drawn upon civilised Europe, and considered it but prudent that she should be prevented from

renewing her crimes. In fact, they regarded the punishment as too lenient for the atrocities perpetrated, and the opposition of those rhetoricians who affected to condemn what had been done, was regarded as mere faction, or mere imbecility, and their names were only recollected in connexion with those deplorable follies which every manly mind was desirous to forget.

Doubtless nothing can be more iniquitous, in a political sense, than interference with the domestic concerns of an independent nation; and there is nothing which the British people would more indignantly resent, if applied to themselves. But the precautionary army which occupied France at this period, and the fine imposed upon her for her political crimes, were not of this description. In no respect whatever was that army allowed to meddle with her domestic politics; and that penalty was as justly imposed as any municipal fine that is exacted from a convicted delinquent. The debates in Parliament respecting these points were offensive to common sense and contradictory to reason, and they have long since been consigned to the scorn or the forgetfulness of the world.

Among all the discussions which arose regarding the different matters connected with and consequent on the peace, those respecting the Holy Alliance, as it was called, were perhaps the most unreasonable. It is inconceivable now, that men could ever have listened with common patience to the absurdities which were at the time raved in the English House of Commons against it. The character of the revolutionary doctrines promulgated from the dens of Jacobinism, seemed to be forgotten; while every ingenuity was exerted to attribute malignity to an association formed to controvert their tendency. But it has always been observed, that after the crisis of a fever, delirium becomes more methodised. The very asperity of the wild notions with which some public men were infected, subsequent to the final overthrow of the Imperial government in France, was a proof that the pestilence was assuaged.

As the character of the war was unprecedented, so the subjects of the treaties of peace were in many respects extraordinary. In particular, the stipulations respecting the restoration of those works of art of which the French had plundered various nations, constituted a new

feature in the topics of diplomacy. It might have been supposed that on a point like this no difference of opinion could have arisen among the English people. But the perverse affections of many ingenious men were excited by that sublime "moral lesson," and the Minister found himself compelled to defend what was in reality an act of magnanimous retribution. "But," said the Earl of Liverpool, "whatever partial and temporary exasperation may exist on this subject, sure I am, that if those works of art had remained in France, they would have been a perpetual rallying point for revolutionary principles, inasmuch as they were trophies of revolutionary triumph. Proud I am of the part which Great Britain has borne in the transaction, because not a single statue or picture has been taken for itself: still prouder am I, because it has caused every one of them to be restored to their original owners."

But whatever differences of opinion might have been put forth, to perplex the policy of Ministers, there was but one sentiment in the mass of the people. The war had terminated with a completeness far beyond the hopes of the most sanguine, and a general exultation was

felt in every pulse of the nation, the effect of which was propitious to the propagation of that high-mindedness which constitutes the true worth of great transactions.

Before the war, the spirit of the people had perhaps been too much addicted to statistical pursuits, and to the more sordid interests of a nation. But the excitement awakened by the wonderful incidents occurring during the course of the war, and especially by the magnificent consummation of it, raised the moral tone of the nation, and tended to refine the sentiments of mankind. Evil had never before so triumphed as in the progress of the French arms; nor had it ever before sustained so signal a humiliation as in the avenging justice which drove Napoleon from civilised society, to live and die among the rocks and serpents of St. Helena. It was necessary for the salvation and supremacy of justice, that "the child and champion of Jacobinism" should be demonstrated to have been an impostor and a thief. It is only vulgarity which imagines that deeds which are crimes in rags become virtues in purple.

The complexion of the discussions which ne-

cessarily arose in Parliament, as the nation proposed to accommodate itself to habits of peace, merits particular notice. The patience with which the war was maintained, is among the finest examples extant of the magnanimity of a great people, and it evinces the high moral level to which these great events had exalted public sentiments. Nevertheless, a salutary jealousy of the Government was displayed; not from the integrity of its intentions being questioned, but from the known tendency of all governments to gravitate into despotism. It was on this plea that the Opposition contended for a reduction of the army, so extensive and so sudden, as proved that they did not sufficiently consider and appreciate the nature of man; they did not take into account that the whole character of the war had a tendency to increase in the human bosom that natural and wise distrust with which power is regarded, and which is the very vitality of freedom itself; but which at the same time engenders a necessity of being able to control this energy, as well as to provide for the casualties of ordinary times.

It was, perhaps, not expedient that the Ministers should publicly advert to this considera-

tion; but it cannot be doubted that it must have had an important influence on their deliberations concerning the army estimates. Nor will it be surprising if posterity imagine that the manly speech of Mr. Frankland Lewis on the occasion, was concerted between the minority and the opposition, in order to show that the constitutional jealousy so salutary to the liberties of the nation, still existed in all its pristine vigour. Had the people not been sensible that the peculiar features of the times justified the continuance of a great military establishment, there was certainly sufficient in the amount of the proposed force to have called up their patriotic jealousy.

But besides the considerations which affected the nation with respect to the army, there was another incident, that at once evinced the high spirit of the people, and the deference paid by the Government to popular feeling. We allude to the firmness with which the repeal of the property tax was demanded, and the judicious grace with which the abolition was conceded. The consent to this impost at first, marked the willingness with which the nation seconded the efforts of government during the war: and the

rational yet firm manner in which it was required to be given up, showed that sense of right, and that calm resolve in the prosecution of it, which does more honour to mankind than all the armies or armadas that they ever equipped or destroyed.

The abolition of the property tax gave occasion for a new modification of finance, the chief feature of which was an appropriation, by the commissioners for the redemption of the national debt, of the unclaimed monies in the Bank of England ; that appropriation being subject to the future claims of the owners for restitution. It is amazing that the principle of this wise measure has not before been generally applied. It is similar to that of the old right of the Crown to unclaimed treasures ; and there can be no reason why individuals should be allowed to keep unclaimed debts, while there is a state which can better use and better preserve them.

This epoch was also distinguished by the exposition of a fact which was conducive to the respectability of the Monarchy. It had been supposed by the bulk of the nation that the annual sum allowed for the civil list was ex-

pended on the Royal Family, and the appurtenances of the King. The times required that this "vulgar error" should be exploded, and accordingly it was shown that the civil list comprehended many officers who properly belonged to the state, as distinct from the Crown; and in consequence a new regulation was adopted, which has extinguished the popular delusion.

Without doubt, it may safely be affirmed, that a spirit of greatness pervaded all the national proceedings immediately subsequent to the war, and that although contemporaries, who were engaged in the operations and discussions of that period, were often insensible to the grandeur of their own actions, posterity will regard them as among the noblest manifestations of human dignity.

Although it is still, and has been since the first connexion of Ireland with England, the custom to deplore the condition of that country, it does not seem at any period to have been a subject of research to ascertain whether its habitual sufferings arose from that connexion, or were the indigenous results of something in itself. In the days of the great Spenser, in his account of Ireland, published in the reign of

Elizabeth, he makes an observation which is still applicable, and will continue to be so till some mode is adopted to effect a change in the moral organisation of the inhabitants, either by the intermixture of another race in the place of those which may be removed, or by the introduction of a new system of education. "They say it is fatal to the destiny of that land," said he, "that no purposes whatsoever which are meant for her good, will prosper or take good effect; which, whether it proceed from the very genius of the soil, or the influence of the stars, or that Almighty God hath not yet appointed the time of reformation, or that he reserveth her in this unquiet state still for some secret scourge which shall by her come into England, is hard to be known, but much to be feared." The comment on this is, that in the year 1816 a force of 25,000 soldiers was supposed to be requisite to preserve peace in Ireland.

But the natural influence of one fact has been for a long period overlooked. By far the majority of the population is Roman Catholic, and yet it is the custom to ascribe her unquiet condition to the domination of the Protestants.

The very reverse ought to be the case. The unquiet should be ascribed to the Catholics; for although the Protestants may have, or had, the ascendancy in the administration of the laws, it is an indisputable fact, that the laws of no community affect the people till events have taken place among the people which call for them to be administered. The troubles of Ireland cannot arise from the laws, or from anything which depends on the government, but must be the effect of some foul secretion or ulcer which corrodes the social and intellectual character of the people.

An attempt at this period to draw attention to the condition of this unhappy country failed of its effect; and it failed necessarily, because it was laid before the public in connexion with that catalogue of undisputed evils which all admitted, but without any attempt to show that evils are not always grievances. Till it be considered that evils cannot be cured by applying to them remedies which are in themselves grievances, Ireland must continue, as she has ever been, a puzzle and a perplexity, that renders the best measures of statesmen ineffectual.

In the course of this year the humanity of

the inhabitants of London, and of the general nation, was much afflicted by the result of an inquiry into the state of mendicity in the metropolis. The odious exposure which the Parliamentary Report made, of the vices and immoralities of poverty, nauseated benevolence, and the remedies suggested by the committee who conducted the investigation were not eminent for wisdom. The inquiry showed, however, that there did exist in the community a desire to improve the circumstances of the miserable, and to circumscribe the facilities which existed for the perpetration of crime; a fact which demonstrated that society was moulding itself into greater purity. The suppression of the evils of guilt and of poverty is unquestionably beyond the power of man; but they may be rendered less injurious and disgusting, and a discipline may be introduced which will cleanse and improve the, perhaps, inevitable condition of the ignorant and the wretched. The institution of this inquiry did honour to the intelligence of the age, even though it must be admitted, that its scope resembled the quests of the alchemist. It did not discover the secret which is perhaps

not to be found ; but, in seeking it, much that was valuable was made manifest.

It may not be irrelevant to notice here, that at this period there was a great effusion of verbosity about national monuments ; and the House of Commons, being quite maudlin with the festivals of the peace, voted 17,000*l.* to erect some structure in commemoration of Trafalgar ! What has become of it ? Let us not, however, be too severe on the Parliament in a fit of intoxication, and regard such levities as deadly sins.

There was at this time in England a manifestation of distress, which, although it might be considered as the consequence of returning from a state of war into peace, could not but excite serious uneasiness, and make all other considerations secondary, when the actual necessities of the people claimed attention. The harvest, too, had comparatively failed, and, as might have been anticipated, those unclean spirits which attribute all calamities to rulers, began to renew their stir and clamour, to the great annoyance of every reflecting person. But all this empty vapouring produced no worse

effect than that of giving the artisans of London a few occasional holidays.

In the midst of the consideration which the state of the public mind necessarily gave to the humane, an event took place productive of unmingled satisfaction ;—the marriage of the Princess Charlotte, the presumptive heiress to the throne, with the Prince of Saxe Cobourg. This incident was the more gratifying at this time, as the Princess was thought to possess many of the best characteristics of the nation, and had shown, in connexion with this marriage itself, an intrepidity of independence which flattered the hopes of the people, that she would at a future day exhibit those qualities which are virtues in sovereigns.

With the mention of this auspicious event we close our sketch of a most important year, the first after a war of unprecedented character and unequalled results.

CHAPTER II.—ANNO 1817.

THE events of the year 1817 are not pleasant to contemplate. The people cherished hopes that peace would pour forth its cornucopia of plenty into the lap of the nation ; and they were naturally disappointed, and attributed the calamities which they suffered to something wrong in the administration of the government. A general paralysis affected industry. The loom stood silent, the merchants were perplexed with bankruptcies, and the produce of the earth was blighted to the expectation. All, in short, suffered. The rich were curtailed in the means of giving employment to the artisans, and the general multitude of labourers found no market for their ingenuity and skill.

It was easy to blame the Government for these results ; but the few who considered the alliance between cause and effect, saw that the war

had given employment to many whom the peace necessarily deprived of their occupations ; while they could discover no remedy for the evil, till time should lead the sufferers into new pursuits. Views of this kind were, however, very partial ; they were altogether beyond the comprehension of the multitude ; and weak but well-meaning individuals, unconsciously infected with the revolutionary mania, believed that a cure might be effected in the disease, by a process that would endanger the very vitals of the nation. Accordingly, they disseminated, with a zeal that might have been worshipped, had it been as wise and honest as it was earnest, those insane principles which threatened the most time-honoured institutions ; bewildering even honourable and respectable men, till they forgot that whatever is old must therefore have been found by experience to have been good. Hence the origin of those radical doctrines which imply that nature, in making men of different strengths and capabilities, and in showing that property is the natural basis of power, had committed errors which men may rectify by political experiments. The progress, however, of the malady may be arrested, and mankind may yet dis-

cover, if they are not previously taught by calamity, that the same kind of slow development which brings the oak out of the acorn, is essential to the growth and improvement of the social condition.

It must doubtless be ascribed to this mania of the times, that the Regent, in proceeding this year to open the Session of Parliament, was attacked by some person amongst the assembled spectators. We are, however, disposed to regard this as an event that characterised the tendency of opinions, rather than as the symptom of any settled design to overthrow the existing system of Government. It was more an act of fatuity than of crime; though it certainly did show the direction which the current of the popular mind was taking. The days are now past in England, when any conspiracy, which is not in unison with public opinion, can be successful. An evil has, however, since grown up, which cannot be too warily watched; namely, a tendency in the Government to consult what is agreeable to the people; as if it were forgotten or overlooked that the majority of all communities are ever the least enlightened. To rule by principles instead of opinions (formerly the

thing desired by philosophical statesmen) has been in a great measure superseded by this deference to the notions of the governed; a deference which implies willing submission, on the part of the enlightened, to the dictates of the ignorant.

In the case of the French Revolution, it was ultimately demonstrated that obedience to the desires of the dominant faction was ruinous to all which the judicious among the nation regarded as honourable and wise.

The disturbances arising out of the transition from war to peace, attained at last to such a height, that the government deemed the ordinary laws no longer adequate to suppress the evil. The information which the Ministers had obtained on this subject was laid before the Secret Committees of the two Houses of Parliament, and their Report confirmed the apprehensions of Government. This led to the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, and to the introduction of other legislative enactments contrary to the principles of the established constitution of the country. Whether or not the case required measures of such severity, was a point disputed by many; but undoubtedly there was

a spirit abroad, and has been ever since, inimical to that security which is identical with liberty in a civilised state.

The operation of the new laws, as might have been foreseen, exasperated the evils they were intended to extinguish, and gave rise to the dissemination of doctrines relative to spies, and the employment of such insidious familiars, that did much to impair the magnanimity of public feeling, which the events of the war had inspired. The mind turns with loathing from the contemplation of the grounds on which criminality against the public may sometimes be apparently extenuated ; for justified it never can be. Mankind suffers more from systematic espionage, in whatever is valuable to the species, than from all the darings of despotism.

The employment of spies is at best but a proof of the good intentions of imbecile and incapable rulers.

One practical result of the distress and disturbances of the kingdom was wiser and more salutary than all the six statutes to which they gave rise. We refer to the introduction of a system of reductions in the public expenditure. It deserves, however, to be remarked

that every abridgment of state disbursements must produce privation somewhere; and it ought always to be borne in mind that the extravagances of public prodigality require to be checked by a gentle hand. Those who suffer by curtailing them are those, for the most part, who do not constitute the class that deserves punishment. The Ministers who sanction them are the delinquents; the instruments themselves can never be the guilty. It was also proposed at this time, as a remedy for the pressure of distress, that assistance should be given for the construction of public works. Certainly it is better to pay the labourer for his hire than to give him alms; and when private individuals are not able, from the vicissitudes of trade, to give employment to their workmen, Government does well to assist in the construction of public works.

Amidst the crude and ineffectual attempts, which were now made to cure public evils by the application of mere palliatives, the heart of humanity was refreshed at perceiving that the spirit to improve our social state was awakened, and that several constitutional questions, which had for their object the moral ex-

altation of the people, were again revived : we allude in particular to Catholic Emancipation, and the Reform of the Representation. It is true no measure was at this time the result on either of these subjects ; but the very agitation of the question did good, inasmuch as it prepared the nation for what was ordained to come to pass. Mr. Wilberforce, also, the chosen adversary of slavery, was still unwearied in his virtuous endeavours, and was paving the way for that entire abolition of the iniquity, which it was reserved as a peculiar glory for the British nation to accomplish, by an act of munificence unparalleled in the history of the world. It is such things as these which make us proud of our parent land.

The year 1817 was, however, upon the whole, in its general complexion dismal. But the public feeling was most of all affected by the death of the Princess Charlotte and her infant. Sympathy, which is the natural echo of the human bosom, and which exists in no other, has ever been particularly sensitive in this country ; and the sensation which this lamentable event produced defies description or conception. Perhaps history affords no parallel to the uni-

versality of the sorrow. The consequence was felt as a domestic grief in every family; and it was in every quarter deplored as a public calamity the results of which could not be foreseen. So signally was this the case, that whatever may have been the character of the discontents with which the kingdom was politically afflicted, it could not be doubted, from the sincerity and universality of the mourning which darkened the whole people, that in their hearts they were disposed to feel and regard loyalty as something akin to the filial and parental affections.

CHAPTER III.—ANNO 1818.

THE prospective aspect of the year 1818, was more encouraging than that of the preceding year. Men began to be sensible that much of the distress of the kingdom was owing to the change from a state of war to one of peace; and the fabric of calamity became less terrible, as the veil of mystery was withdrawn from its features. The agitators of the minds of the industrious classes felt their vocations disregarded, as employments revived; and they ultimately became as harmless as the waters of the ocean, when the instigating winds have abated.

Meantime our merchants and manufacturers, not considering that other nations must have suffered in at least an equal degree, from the same sort of afflictions as those by which we were visited; forgetting that war had raged over all the earth, and that every state and

kingdom could not but feel affected, as we had felt; regardless or insensible of this circumstance, they entered into the most fallacious speculations, and in the result found their hopes utterly disappointed. Nevertheless, the perplexities which resulted from these indiscretions were not so general, as the distress of the previous year; they were confined to a smaller class, and may be described as an abridgment of enjoyments, rather than as a dearth of necessities.

The suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act was now revoked, and the infamous system of espionage, which in their unwise and unworthy conceptions of human nature the Ministry had recourse to, was loudly and indignantly condemned, as both atrocious and despicable, by every right-minded man in the country.

In a word, the symptoms of our being in a state of peace, began now to be manifest; and, like the swelling of the buds which announces the spring, though the change was not very apparent, there was no doubt that "the time of the singing of birds had come:" for the diminution of existing taxes was, at least, *talked of*.

One subject of parliamentary discussion, at

this time, merits particular notice: it was that which respected the character of our monetary system, as connected with the Bank of England. We do not say that the whole display of the orators who exposed themselves on this occasion amounted to the ridiculous; but posterity will look in vain to it for proofs of that superiority of intellect, which is generally attributed to those distinguished statesmen. The absurd notion that gold, or any commodity whatever, can be the standard of value, was glaring in their declamations; and it was evident, that our public men had still to learn, that there can be no criterion of value but desire or demand. An orange in the thirsty desert, is worth an ingot of gold; and a biscuit to the starving mariner on the ocean, is more valuable than the far off Bank of England.

It cannot be justly said, that the events which took place in the course of this year were of an impressive character to contemporaries, or that posterity will look back to them as forming an historical epoch; but they evidently indicated a progressive movement in public opinion, from the effects of which benefits will assuredly be reaped by future ages. The spirit of the laws

was mitigated in the severity of its retributions; education was more philosophically considered than it had ever been before; and the multiplication of churches showed the existence of a disposition to preserve and diffuse that only efficient morality, which arises from religious feelings and the practice of sacred rites. The slave trade also obtained a share of public attention; and the necessity of extending the elective franchise was revived with increasing effect. The revision of the Poor Laws was also felt to be more than ever necessary; and the honour of the legislative proceedings was in general worthy of a nation which felt that it had neither attained the noon of its glory nor the manhood of its power.

Many deplorable events have had the effect of convincing the British people of the necessity of securing an uninterrupted succession to the crown. The death of the Princess Charlotte, with her infant, in a very special manner reminded them of this important consideration, and gave rise, in the course of the year, to no less than four marriages of the Royal Princes; for previously, it had not been apprehended, nor was it indeed even thought of, that the

numerous family of George the Third would permit a deficiency of heirs to the Crown. But besides the political expediency of taking some steps to avert the consequences of this possible contingency, the confluence, as it may be called, of so many royal marriages at one period, occasioned a proceeding which attracted some attention. It was held by many to be unconstitutional to consult, as Ministers did, a number of parliamentary characters, as to what requisite provision should be settled on the Princes, before they announced their approaching nuptials to Parliament. But who can seriously say that such a proceeding could, or ought to, have been regarded as unconstitutional—the very object of it being, in fact, to ascertain how Parliament was likely to relish any proposition on the subject. It can never be unconstitutional to take precautions which may anticipate public excitement, and consequent danger to the public peace.

Towards the close of the year Queen Charlotte died, after a lingering illness. The event had been foreseen, and, when it happened, the sympathy of the nation was not greatly awakened. That Princess had, indeed, some-

what waned in popular opinion for some time before ; but such ought not to have been the case ; for few have so long occupied such a conspicuous station, not merely with less blame, but with so much sterling worth ? She had, perhaps, fewer foibles than fall to the lot of most women ; and her conduct as a wife and mother deserves unqualified approbation. It could not be said that she was distinguished by her talents ; but she possessed what, perhaps, as a consort, is better than talent, namely, great prudence, and most exemplary propriety and purity of manners. In these respects, Queen Charlotte will ever be justly regarded as an ornament of the regal rank ; and after her death, circumstances transpired, which showed that goodness in her was the result of real virtue, and not practised to gain the applause of the world. But it was not only in the household charities, and in evincing at all times a correct sense of the proprieties of her station, that this excellent personage excelled : she did, in fact, possess, though not in a high degree, talents that were not unworthy of her station and deportment. Several translations from her native language are known to have proceeded

from her pen ; and the author of this sketch has reason to believe that, while the King her husband was busy with the repairs of Windsor Castle, she composed a history of the Red and White Roses, and the Wars of York and Lancaster.

Some objection has been made to the frugality of Queen Charlotte, as unbecoming the magnificence of her station ; but at her death, when the curtain of concealment was drawn aside, it appeared that she was only parsimonious in order that she might be the more charitable. The old Scottish lady who, with Shaksperian discernment, described George the Third as “ an honest man with a want,” said of his wife, that “ she was a wiselike woman, just like a midwife, and she ought not to wear a turned silk gown.”

CHAPTER IV.—ANNO 1819.

THE buds of peace, which appeared to be swelling during the preceding year, became unfolded in the present. The returns of the revenue, and of the exports and imports, were most satisfactory; and the sanguine began to think they saw, at the end of a long vista of prosperity, the bright and beautiful regions of true glory and lasting peace.

The annual communication of the Regent to Parliament announced the facts on which these anticipations were grounded. Various reductions in the royal establishment were made, in consequence of the death of the Queen; but in the parliamentary consideration of the topics to which the proposal gave rise, there was more of party spirit displayed than the nation generally sympathised with; for, to the honour of the people be it said, they were reluctant to curtail

the appointments allowed to the old King ; indeed, there was a kind of compassion universally felt for him;—as if the consideration of his infirmities begot tenderness.

The character of the proceedings in Parliament were, during the session of this year, emphatically pacific. The Government was engaged on measures of that description. The revenue presented, by reductions in the subjects of expenditure, a balance in favour of the nation, and it was expected to increase by an increasing prosperity. This was justly inferred from the nature of the increase which was evident in all the branches of taxation.

Among other blessed effects of the peace, which now offered themselves to public notice, one was a universal persuasion that the time was at hand when the cash payments of the Bank of England should be resumed. Every man admitted the propriety of the restriction which had been placed on the coinage issues during the war ; yet it is amazing, now that the discussions have resulted in the resumption of cash payments, to look back at the crude and jejune theories which puzzled the public mind, as to what is or should be the principle of a

monetary system. The representative character of a circulating medium was forgotten ; and men who were reputed sagacious lent their imaginations to theories on bullion and paper, which transcended in absurdity the dreams of the alchymists.

DEMAND is in fact the only true standard of value ; and the utmost that can be stated of gold is, that because of its price, it is less than most other commodities liable to fluctuate, and is more perhaps than any other generally recognised as a desirable thing to possess. Gold undoubtedly approximates to the nature of a criterion ; but to consider it, in a commercial country, as possessing any more sacred character than that of a commodity, is one of those inconceivable absurdities which may be classed with faith in rotten bones and transubstantiation. Did not the fact of the nation having, for more than twenty years, made incredible exertions, and produced incredible results, under the Bank restriction, prove of how little importance gold is, even as a circulating medium, in such a country as Great Britain ? The very aspect of it, in the shape of coin, was almost unknown.—In fact, the prohibition of the mint-

age of gold is a reform that cannot too soon be taken into consideration. The existence of the doctrines respecting its monetary nature, are destined, at no distant period, to be classed among obsolete vulgar errors.

Among those other topics which can only be well weighed in a period of peace, was the state of the criminal laws, with a view to the mitigation of punishment. As nations become sedate in their habits, offences diminish in atrocity, and it is therefore expedient that the penalties for the perpetration of them should also be allayed. The British Legislature now felt this truth; and no part of the proceedings of Parliament displayed more unmingled wisdom than those which related to this topic.

The consideration of the Catholic Claims was perhaps judicious; but the abrogation of the laws which affected the civil rights of the citizens professing the popish religion, was undoubtedly wisely deferred, if it was only because the Protestants, who had the ascendancy, were not ripe for the concessions applied for. It seems extraordinary, when viewed philosophically *à priori*, that one class of men should presume to think that another ought not to worship

the Deity except in *their* fashion:—and certainly, if equality of rights can be allowed on any subject whatever, *this* is the one. Still, mankind must consent to surrender some of their natural rights as individuals, for leave to live in society; and perhaps theoretically the restrictions on the Catholics may be considered as offering no more than a fair counterpoise for their avowed allegiance to a foreign Potentate—the Pope. But unquestionably the spirit of the age demanded that the penalties which this supposed allegiance may have required and occasioned should undergo revision and mitigation.

The remainder of the parliamentary proceedings of this year, and those relating to the internal polity of the kingdom, were all in the same spirit of conciliation which we have noticed. But an incident occurred which led to the abolition of the obsolete law of trial by wager of battle, and which ought to have had the effect of directing the attention of the Legislature to the circumstance of laws remaining valid on the statute book, at a period when the improved humanity and enlightenment of the nation would no longer endure their execution.

The moral sentiments of every period should have due weight and consideration, in regarding the circumstances which affect the extenuation or the aggravation of crimes.

It may perhaps be regarded as a human weakness, if not a human instinct, that agitators who go about the country persuading the people that they are grievously oppressed, will never want auditors. But it does not therefore follow that such quacks are wiser than other mountebanks. To this species of gullibility the English people has in all ages been prone; and towards the end of this year the type of the disease was particularly alarming.

The seditious doctors had been for some months unusually active in their mischievous vocations; and, by their nostrums, evils which were seen by the reflecting to be of temporary malignity, were exasperated into crime.

There is no satisfaction to the philosophic mind to dwell on the errors of a great people. We therefore intentionally treat the madness of the mob at Manchester, and all the symptoms of the same moral influenza existing elsewhere, as matters justly meriting to be forgotten rather than recorded. Those movements, however,

occasioned such a general panic at the time, that Parliament was again assembled in November, and legal expedients were adopted with success to quell them. But there were evil spirits abroad, who represented the measures of Government as indicating machinations against the liberties of the subject. But the character of their delusions was soon exposed; for so soon as the agitators were prevented from pursuing their vocation, the evil ceased, and the progression of the national prosperity revived and continued.

CHAPTER V.—ANNO 1820.

THE events of this year are of a more picturesque and striking character than those of the last. The first which the future historian will remark, is the death of the aged George the Third. It was long expected; but still, when it did take place, the emotion in the public mind was profound and general.

It cannot be said that although the reign of George the Third displayed stupendous phenomena, he was a great monarch; but, on the other hand, few, indeed, will refuse to bestow upon him the epithet of a good man. His peculiarity was, that in his habits and character he represented the Squirearchy of England; and we do not know that there has ever, in the whole world, existed a class so respectable, with so few and such innocent foibles. So far as the personal example of kings in their private capa-

city can be supposed to affect the manners of their subjects, the merits of this paternal old man were of the highest importance, at a time when the spirit of the age ran strong against high station. Nor did he lack those virtues which evince the possession of magnanimity and courage. His life was several times the aim of maniacs; and the coolness and dignity of his behaviour at the attempt in the theatre, evinced a degree of moral serenity that was almost sublime. His consideration also for the descendants of the unfortunate Stuart, was in the finest spirit of royalty; and his disregard of caricaturists and personal libellists bore testimony to the consciousness of his own worth. In the case of the now-forgotten ridicule of Peter Pindar, he is said to have been one of the most diverted of the satirist's readers, and to have protected him from prosecution. But even in serious attacks he showed the same equanimity. In his morning rambles alone through Windsor, he once went into a bookseller's shop, and took up a book. The master was absent, and when he returned, the King was reading Paine's Rights of Man and continued to read. The bibliopole was in agony; for his Majesty

had opened the book at the place where he himself is described as unfit to perform the office of a beadle. Presently he laid the book down, and entered into conversation, with his habitual good-humour.

We well remember the impressive description of Windsor Castle, which a very accomplished Foreign Prince gave us, after he had visited it incognito, while the blind, infirm, old man was confined there. His Highness's account of the silence and solemnity was truly poetical; for the associations were shaded with reminiscences of the King's condition. We forget the words of his description; but they were as beautiful as those of Horace Walpole:

“ What awful silence ! how these antique towers
And vacant courts chill'd the suspended soul,
Till expectation wore the cast of fear ;
And fear, half ready to become devotion,
Mumbles a kind of mental orison.”

Shortly before the demise of the King, the Duke of Kent died. He was a Prince who in many points of disposition resembled his father.*

* The writer knew him well, and can avouch for the possession of a degree of even boyish naïveté, which in a

In periods of disturbance, there are always plots hatched, remarkable at once for atrocity and absurdity. Of this kind one was discovered in February of this year, in which these two characteristics were conspicuously apparent. It was a conspiracy to blow the whole ministry to atoms, in the midst of their feasting, at a cabinet dinner. But although it is impossible to think of such a scheme for the destruction of the British government with gravity, yet the practicability of carrying it into effect involved considerations of awe and abhorrence; and ultimately it gave occasion to the perpetration of several murders among the conspirators. We

person of his high rank was peculiarly amiable. Happening to be sitting with his Royal Highness in his library one evening at Kensington Palace, when the two-penny post letters were brought in, the number was considerable, and one of them, which bore anything but an aristocratic or literary aspect, he opened first, remarking, with a smile, that it was doubtless an affair of charity. It was from a drummer in his regiment, and was written in large text. It related to something concerning the boy's mother. Such a letter was undoubtedly a convincing proof of the light in which he was held by those who looked up to him;—and the perusal of it evidently gave him pleasure.

use the phrase murders advisedly ;—for though the ministry were informed of what was devised against them, they took no adequate steps to prevent the conspirators from carrying on their designs, till they could not be seized without the certainty of encountering resistance.

In the provinces, the disturbances to which we have alluded in the foregoing chapter, as the cause of calling Parliament together, were really alarming ; entirely owing, however, to the insufficiency of the force employed to keep the peace, and to its being tardily used for that purpose. In England the focus of excitement was Huddersfield, and in Scotland, Glasgow. We have no epithet of indignation to apply to the conduct of government on this occasion : it was like the imbecility of natural idiotism. Although they were fully apprised of the designs entertained, they took no steps to prevent the crime till the frantic bedlamites of the insurrections had ripened themselves for massacre or for punishment. An address to the inhabitants of Great Britain and Ireland was in fact published in the name of a provisional government, and placarded at Glasgow on the 1st of April—

all fools' day ! But the **f**ools in office, without observing the date,—and instead of treating the whole matter as a hoax, as they should have done,—considered it as treason, and incurred the contempt of posterity by the noise they made, when the delirium of the hungry mechanics of Glasgow, Paisley, &c. had boiled over into rebellion. The numerous murders which were at this time perpetrated at Greenock, partook more of the character of a riot of intoxicated volunteers belonging to the obscure town of Port Glasgow, than of any political movement. The affair is now sunk into oblivion.

As for the battle of Bonnymuir, as it is called, one man had the glory of having his hand rid-dled through by a pike, and his “gallant geld-ing” mortally wounded. Oh ! the heads that are in high places ! Statues have heads always ; but statesmen engaged in civil broils only sometimes !

A dissolution of Parliament took place after the death of George III., and the necessary measures consequent on such an event were quickly arranged. The routine business of the state was also transacted, after the new Parlia-

ment met, in the usual way, and with a fitting progression, that showed the nation was still advancing. At this time an unexpected event filled the whole kingdom with consternation; we allude to the arrival and trial of Queen Caroline.

In adverting here to that painful subject, we merely do so for the purposes of completing our record:—for it is not of a nature to allow of our treating it properly. All we shall say is, that although we attended the investigation for two and twenty days with exemplary patience, in order to obtain the truth, we are still unsatisfied. We shall therefore speak only of the result. The Bill against her Majesty was abandoned; and the populace, without caring the worth of two straws whether she was guilty or innocent, took her part, merely, we verily believe, from the excitement of the moment. Perhaps we might be justified in saying that, because she was a lonely woman, their generosity was interested; for the English mob is not ungenerous. But we suspect they did not think much about her innocence. All we shall remark further is, that the hesitation of her Ma-

jesty's counsel, when the witness Restelli's permitted departure became known, was an equivocal proceeding ; and that out of deference to the world the inquiry should not have then proceeded further.

CHAPTER VI.—ANNO 1821.

THE year 1821 cannot, in any respect, be considered as an important one in the series of a distinguished period. The treatment of the Queen, like a pebble thrown into a calm ocean, continued with widening circles to affect the remoter parts of the nation; but the agitation in the centre was subsiding. We offer no opinion on the conduct of her Majesty, in condescending to be made the idol of the mob. She had undoubtedly reason to feel that she was deserted by the court party, in a manner that showed, if not a conviction, at least a persuasion of her guilt; and it was natural to become desirous of demonstrating the possession of influence. She best knew whether she was innocent or guilty; but if the latter, there was no possible excuse for the effrontery with which she braved the King. In this, however, we are,

perhaps, actuated by unworldly notions. We have no pardon for those who are conscious of guilt, yet act as if they were innocent; and when they dare to become avengers, we have only detestation for them. On the other hand, who can applaud the innocent for submitting meekly and in silence to the utmost degree of outrage and wrong?

But we abstain from further remark on this topic; because we feel too strongly on it to be able to offer any opinion which may not be liable to misconception.

The progressive movement of the nation, in the midst of the conflict with which society was molested by the personal enmity of the King and Queen, suffered no interruption. But it cannot be doubted that the political aspect of the kingdom, to other states, was anything but tranquil; and was a lesson given to all statesmen, to be wary and cautious how they make the domestic bickering, or even the private guilt, of high parties, the subjects of popular discussion.

The routine business of Parliament was, perhaps, as satisfactorily arranged as could well be expected; and in respect to the government estimates and measures, there was nothing sus-

ceptible of more cavil than might be expected, where an opposition is justly regarded as a requisite department in the institutions of the state.

The Catholic question was disposed of as in the preceding year; that is, with a display of as little philosophical intelligence as possible. Economy was in fact the order of the day; and the minds of public men evinced a becoming abstemiousness. It is impossible to read of their talk without suspecting that at times there is a concord of opinion, which seems as if it were preconcerted. The Reform question was also not forgotten; but the public took little interest in it. A few vociferous demagogues, it is true, laboured in their vocations; but altogether the time was not come when agitators were to feel themselves of consequence.

In the summer of this year the people were amused with one of those exhibitions of state pageantry which seem to be occasionally got up, with a view to convince the commonalty that the earnings of their industry, which are exacted from them by the hand of taxation, are not all lavished on such useless or dangerous things as navies and armies, but that they do indeed get sometimes a pennyworth for their penny. We

allude to the coronation of George the Fourth. The abortive attempt of the poor Queen to play a part in the show, was a pathetic incident. Her indiscretions, and the accusations against her, were forgotten in the melancholy spectacle of her begging for admission from door to door at the Abbey, and retiring repulsed from them all. The whole range of dramatic poetry has nothing so touching as the following account, and the associations it is calculated to awaken. After many mortifying indignities at different places, her Majesty got to the Abbey door, where Lord Hood, who was with her, desired admission for the Queen. The door-keepers arranged themselves across the entrance, and requested to see the tickets.

Lord Hood.—I present you your Queen. Surely it is not necessary for her to have a ticket.

Door-keeper.—Our orders are to admit no person without a peer's ticket.

Lord Hood.—This is your Queen. She is entitled to admission without such a form.

[The Queen here smiled; but said, in an agitated voice, “Yes, I am your Queen; will you admit me?”]

Door-keeper.—My orders are specific, and I feel myself bound to obey them.

[Here the Queen laughed, or seemed to do so.]

Lord Hood.—I have a ticket.

Door-keeper.—Then, my lord, we will let you pass on producing it.

[Here his lordship showed a ticket.]

Door-keeper.—This will let one person pass, but no more.

Lord Hood.—Will your Majesty go in alone?

[Her Majesty hesitated.]

Lord Hood.—Am I to understand that you refuse her Majesty admission?

Door-keeper.—We only act in conformity with our order.

[Her Majesty again seemed to laugh.]

Lord Hood.—Then you refuse the Queen admission? Will your Majesty enter without your ladies?

Her Majesty declined, and Lord Hood conducted her back to her carriage. Shakspeare himself never imagined such a scene as this, or one so pregnant with deep and melancholy interest.

On the 7th of August (in much less than a month from the above period) the Queen died,—it was said,—of a natural malady. We forbear to speak in detail of her funeral; though there is nothing more wild and exciting in all the poetry of Germany. We can only say, that surely the kennels must have been raked for offal, to enable some demon, who hated the magnanimity of the British people, to construct likenesses of the men then in power, and in their names sanctioned proceedings which the English language affords no epithet black enough to designate as they deserve.

CHAPTER VII.—ANNO 1822.

It was felt in the course of this year, when men had leisure to look about them, that the world had now arrived at one of those eras from which posterity dates a new series of events. Society has been compared to the dead bones which the prophet saw in vision revived; but here the feeling which might dictate the comparison would not be correct. The principle of resurrection was not there;—there could be no Resurrection; for never before had there been such an epoch as that in which we lived. It was a new section of the parabola of eternity, on which the world had entered, and much of the error which mingled with the reason of men must be ascribed to that same circumstance. They thought that old times and practices would come again; but they forgot that though there may be fine days in October, the

summer is then over and gone. Yet we are wrong in the application of this simile ; for mankind had now passed from the spring of their days into the summer. The knowledge which had been sown was now growing into flower, changing by its appearance the whole face of things. As in all similar mutations,—such as the dissemination of Christianity or the reformation of the Church,—the genius of the old and the past system waged war with that of the new and the future ; and men, according to their interests, allied themselves to that side which promised the most advantage. Those who were in the enjoyment of the immunities of the departing epoch, naturally became its defenders ; and their opponents were adventurers, eager and enterprising to accomplish their overthrow, and to welcome the coming change. Gifted minds were at this period too much regarded : it was not considered that the knowledge which was manifesting itself around, had been sown by those who were as stars in former times ; and that the few distinguished in our day, were in like manner destined to influence less the present age than posterity.

On the 5th of February, the King met the

Parliament, and delivered a speech, singularly demonstrative of the paucity of philosophical reflection in his Cabinet. He spoke as if the aspect of things was that of resuscitation merely, and as if his prompters did not observe that new characteristics were unfolding themselves ; what he imagined were buds and blossoms, were full-blown flowers and early fruits. Thus it happened that the ministry, in overlooking the progress of opinion, applied cordials and restoratives, instead of that purifying regimen which the condition of the nation required : and hence, by the unskilfulness of the state doctors, tumours and abscesses gathered in the vitals of the state. The whole system with respect to Ireland was essentially erroneous ; it was formed on the principle of making that better which was incurable. The gangrene was obvious, but it was treated as inflammation merely ; and plasters and poultices were applied, when amputation alone could give relief. We say this after deep consideration, and with deliberate condemnation. Instead of investigating the sources of the evil connected with Ireland, they only asked each other what medicines they should apply to her. There was no doubt that

Ireland was diseased, and that the prolongation of that treatment from which she had obtained no relief, could not cure her ; after a prolonged trial, it had failed ; and the inference was, that it should be changed. To describe how the noxious nostrums were prepared and administered, would be a waste of time. We consign all that was said and done about Ireland at this period to utter contempt, with the exception of Lord Lansdowne's proposition to commute the tithes, and Lord Wellesley's ineffectual good intentions as lord lieutenant. A chapter taken from the history of Elizabeth's reign, as connected with Ireland, will afford a good view of its condition in the reign of George the Fourth. It is only necessary to forget three hundred years !

Another proof that men in power were actuated by healing intentions merely, without paying any attention to the progress of the disease, was the nonsense which was talked and listened to respecting the distress of the agriculturist. Will posterity believe that it was proposed to grant a respite from this pressure, by means of a loan ? that it was in contemplation to burden the whole kingdom, with all its com-

mercial and manufacturing interests, in order that

“ The gentlemen of England,
Who live at home at ease,”

might get their rents paid ? It is incredible to think that such an insane project could ever have been imagined by any man out of Bedlam. There was not a schoolboy who did not know, or ought to have known, that the agricultural distress arose from the rents being *too* high, in consequence of their having been rated during war, while labourers were multiplied by peace. Nor was it enough to propose the abolition of taxes ; which was, in fact, only another mode of making the community pay the landlords.

In the midst of the discussions respecting the embarrassments of the farmers, those which respected the finances remained much as heretofore ; though some of the propositions to abolish taxes were allowed to be heard.

The spirit of legal reform was still awake, and unquestionably, in the course of the session, several statutes were greatly improved. A judicious extension of the Navigation Laws was enacted ; and the trade of the colonies was

placed on a more liberal footing than it had been.* We must also hail with satisfaction the benevolent attempt to inflict penalties for ill-using those animals which minister to the convenience of man. There was in this a decisive proof of the improved humanity of the age. It is right to notice also, though the endeavours came to no issue, that there was this year some declamation about Parliamentary Reform, evincing however, that few public men considered it on the true principle, namely, that property should be the basis of political privilege. Nor was it adverted to, that the amazing increase of property in the realm, claimed an extension of the elective franchise. Some also talked of universal suffrage; a theory which is opposed to the work of the Almighty himself,—who has made the strong as well as weak—the stupid, and the shrewd—such dunces as were then in office, and men of common understanding.

After Parliament had adjourned, the King made a trip to Scotland; and the whole “an-

* Why the colonies are not all as free as the parent country in matters of trade, is a mystery, like that which refuses to recognise the pheasants and partridges on a man's estate as property.

cient kingdom" was in a "guffaw" of joy on the occasion. Posterity admires and will admire the awful remains of the amphitheatre of Titus, Gibbon says; and from Maiden Kirk to John o'Groats, will Scotland exult with the remembrance of the galravetchings and gavallings of that memorable visit. But the wisest men sometimes amuse themselves with forms and follies, as joyous children do with romps. Are such, however, the proofs of a nation's prosperity?

During the king's visit to Scotland, an incident took place in London, which must not be omitted, even in a cursory sketch of this kind; we allude to the suicide of Lord Londonderry. He had long performed a distinguished part in the great political drama of the age, and his death would, at any period of it, have been solemn; but the circumstances under which it took place, made it impressive even to his enemies. This distinguished man had, however, no *personal* enemies, though he had many bitter political adversaries and rivals. He certainly was not a great man; but to have so long maintained his predominance in a state like that of England, proves that he must have possessed

qualities of no common kind, and that he was entitled to the situation which he held, as regards his opponents and contemporaries. His style of public speaking was more that of a man of office than of an orator; and his measures were remarkable rather for boldness than for wisdom. It would be wrong to ascribe to him personally those stratagems of state by which delinquents were allowed to ripen into criminals, instead of being arrested in their guilty intentions; stratagems, of which no language is strong enough to express the nation's detestation. But, at least, he did not resist them, and must therefore be regarded as a "*particeps criminis*." Persons who know *à priori* of a design to perpetrate offence, and who do not take measures to prevent it till the intended conspirators become punishable, are in fact guilty of that delinquency which converts punishment into crime.

In his manners, Castlereagh had no repulsive characteristics; on the contrary, he was more agreeable than most men, and was invested by nature with a prepossessing exterior, which in matters of business is of no small importance. His integrity as a man was unquestioned; but his

magnanimity as a statesman was more than equivocal ; not however from intention, but from an inability to conceive in what true greatness consists. He was an honest man to the best of his ability ; and was of doubtful probity only as a minister, and then only because he was sometimes obliged to have recourse to cunning, from not having real talent for the task he had to perform. There was too much management in his policy ; and hence he often stirred up strife, when his measures were really intended to promote unity and peace. No man will deny to him the desire to be great, and even to be good ; but few will allow that he possessed the requisites to be either. Fortune was more favourable to him than nature. Of his domestic character we know little : he had no children ; but he is reported to have been an affectionate husband, and a most affable master. England was not the place in which a man of his kind and amount of talents and acquirements could ever deserve or obtain general respect. But in a more despotic state, he would undoubtedly have been in his proper element.

CHAPTER VIII.—ANNO 1823.

IT is a sublime subject of contemplation, that notwithstanding the atrocious character of the late war, and its tendency to render every feeling of the heart callous, the purification of society throughout Christendom had been still progressing. In Great Britain the mitigation of the spirit of the laws showed that the nation was becoming more civilised, or, if the expression may be supposed better, more humane; though we may consider humanity and civilisation as synonymous.

It would, however, appear that when Parliament met, there had been some qualms felt within the King's Cabinet, as to the continuance of the peace. We only speak of qualms; for there was no external symptom to justify suspicion that war was in contemplation. His Majesty did not assure his "Lords and Gentlemen" that

he had "every reason to hope that tranquillity would remain uninterrupted," but only "that his efforts had been unremittingly exerted to preserve the peace of Europe;" and that he "still continued to use his most anxious endeavours and good offices, to allay the irritation unhappily subsisting between the French and Spanish Governments."

The fact of such an irritation existing should be borne in mind, as explaining, to a very considerable degree, the apparent languor with which the state was indisputably affected. The debates in Parliament tended to confirm the apprehensions which the King's speech was calculated to awaken; and Hobhouse, with the gift like Solomon's, for which he is so distinguished among those who know him, said that, "It was with fear and trembling that he suffered the opinion to escape his lips, that the war was inevitable." Certainly the aspect of the nations was at the time rather sullen; but it pleased Providence and the British ministry, that war should not take place. All, therefore, in the discussion, which implied hostilities, may be judiciously forgotten. It cannot, however, be suspected that it was not the general desire of the

nation that peace should continue. The proof of the sincerity of the Government in their efforts to preserve it, was in their sending to the congress at Verona the Duke of Wellington, the most straightforward man of the age, and who would not have undertaken the mission had he not been convinced that there was to be no juggling. But notwithstanding the sincere efforts of the ministry, there did take place some hostile demonstrations between France and Spain. The scene, however, was of little interest to the British public, whose feelings alone in this sketch, we attempt to describe.

The financial affairs for the year were arranged as satisfactorily as was expected, and the estimates passed without much disputation or bickering. The opposition in general testified no dissatisfaction at the amount of the military force ; while Hume took occasion, when it was proposed, to shew how incapable he is by nature of understanding any general principle.

Among the evidences that a latent inclination or leaning in the public mind towards Parliamentary Reform was beginning to manifest

itself, were the discussions connected with that subject in the House of Commons. They tended to show, what many had long believed, that the structure of the representation required revision; and these discussions were of such a nature, that some of those who had never thought at all concerning the question, now began to see that something must sooner or later be done. To a studious observer, however, these discussions were not satisfactory. The leaven of the French anarchy had evidently tainted many of our public men; and as this leaven was most palatable to the lower orders of society, it was not merely to be apprehended, but was demonstrable, that, come the Reform when it might, the gold would be alloyed with French metal,—in other words, that population rather than property would be the great point of consideration.

At what period this doctrine of population rather than property came to be regarded as constituting the standard of political right, — or, in other words, the criterion of political claims,—(as property had always hitherto been from the beginning of time,) we have never

troubled ourselves to inquire ; conceiving that it was one of those popular delusions which would gradually disappear. But we did not bear in mind that the strongest arms are generally allied to the thickest heads, and that the very promulgation of the doctrine would probably have the immediate effect of arraying a large physical force against all time-honoured institutions. There is now but one way of counteracting the evil : namely, by EDUCATION. No enlightened man will ever imagine that population can be the true basis of representation ; for society, with all its multifarious forms, has but one and the same object—THE PROTECTION OF PROPERTY : for *that* Governments are endured ; for *that* laws are made and administered. The sense of what property is must be generated in the human breast, before population will be allowed that ascendancy which makes it the interest of the many to destroy the rights of the few. The very principle of justice must be weeded away from the human mind, before that which is *mine* ought to be shared with *thee*—not only with *thee*, but with every idle “*ne’er-do-weel*” who thinks his neighbours loaf better than

his own. Is the glory of personal independence, — that feeling which has been the spring of all virtue since the beginning of the world, — to be suffocated by such theories as universal suffrage, and the sneaking, cowardly skulking of the vote by ballot? Is there no man who will proclaim the truth, that to substitute population for property, as the basis of representation, would be a revolution greater than the French insanity?

But although there was much to deplore in the promulgation of the baleful principles of that fraudulent equality which is proposed to be established by instituting universal suffrage, still the claims of benevolence were not overlooked in the propositions, which were daily attracting attention, for ameliorating the blood-thirsty code of England. It was not yet however noticed, even by the saintly politicians in Parliament, that although the decalogue forbids many actions, it prescribes no punishments. No—with infinite wisdom it has left to the spirit of the age in which the deeds might be done, to adjudge what should be their penalty.

The chronic disease of Ireland continued

through this year with fluctuating symptoms. Various remedies were proposed; but all were ineffectual, and ever will be, till a thorough investigation of the condition of that ill-fated country, has determined the true nature of its disease.

CHAPTER IX.—ANNO 1824.

It was certainly the characteristic of George the Fourth's Government, that Parliament was less tampered with than it ever had been before ; and it must be confessed that although his character exhibited many faults and errors, the period of his reign and regency was, generally speaking, a constitutional period. The natural weakness of man impels us to regard his errors with compassion rather than with indignation ; but we have no pardon for any individual, or any set of men, who undertake the government of England, without feeling that, in assuming that office, they become the organs of a great, a liberal, and a high-minded people. If they are conscious that they are naturally unfitted for the high task, they should not dare to accept of place ; yet the very act of doing so proves their inherent meanness. It is different with the

King. He cannot help being a King; he is born to the station, and cannot know by any innate intimation whether or not he is qualified for his "great office."

Without question, the year 1824 was one of the greatest promise and prosperity which the British nation had ever reached. Other periods may have been more brilliant; but the universal blaze of this time was more serene and more exhilarating. Not only a feeling of vigour pervaded all the country, but the confidence of the people in the prognostications of the time was such as the oldest did not remember. Even Ireland enjoyed the respite of a temporary slumber. The revenues were increasing; agriculture was recovering from the depression under which it had laboured; and throughout all classes of the community of Great Britain cheerful contentment was the anthem they uttered for blessings possessed. The state of the Spanish provinces in America inspired our merchants and manufacturers with hope, and the proceedings of Government respecting them merit the unqualified epithet of judicious.

This state of things was partly ascribed to the influence of Canning in the King's Councils.

He was a man of genius, undoubtedly, to a certain degree ; and the age required that the spirit of such a man should predominate ; for the old landmarks of political wisdom had been disordered or swept away, and it was not so necessary to repair what had been injured, as to supply the desiderata suitable to the new order of things. Old institutions had been confused together, and precedents had become so confounded that they puzzled mere official intellects, when expedients were required for the exigences of an epoch that will hereafter be regarded as in some degree revolutionary.

What rendered this period remarkable, was an acknowledgment in the King's speech, that the cheering prospects of the kingdom were owing to the operation of natural causes, and not to the wisdom or foresight of the executive. Distresses may arise from attempts to counteract the issue of natural causes ; and ministers often attempt such counteraction, in the persuasion that they know the future better than Providence. But by obeying the tendency of these causes, good ever ensues. It was supposed very generally, and with good reason, that Canning perceived the natural tendency of

things much more distinctly than his predecessor Londonderry, and that he had the wit to give way to that tendency.

We ought not to pass without placing in the pillory of these pages the sentiment in which Lord Holland ascribed the flourishing state of the country mainly to the wisdom and firmness of Parliament. In his Lordship's opinion, Divine Providence was only entitled to secondary thanks; the Lords, of which his Lordship is one, being entitled to half at least of the honor and glory! But against this blasphemous trash, one philosophical remark of the Marquis of Lansdowne may be placed. He observed that, "If all chance of advancement in the old world was cramped and chained down by two or three great powers, who presided over the destinies of Europe, with how much satisfaction did he perceive the seeds of improvement and free government transplanted across the Atlantic."

It is in this way statesmen should think. The schoolmaster is abroad, and the sooner he is sent home the better, or the consequences of his instruction must be guarded against.

Some observations which Canning made, with reference to the same subject, were full of frank

and manly wisdom ; and it could not therefore be doubted that a new and better colonial system for ourselves was on the eve of promulgation.

It was evident, from the tenour of the parliamentary discussions, that the independence of the Spanish Colonies would in due time be recognised. The inability of Spain to recover their allegiance was acknowledged on all sides ; but it was consistent with our national character, that this should be virtually confessed by the Spanish Government before we interfered, as the French had done, on the occasion of the revolt of those provinces which now constitute the United States. This circumstance went to prove that the political morality of states had improved, as well as the humanity of the British people. The next era in the colonial connexion of nations will give to colonies all the privileges of the parent state. There will then arise no desire for separation. It is by treating the colonies as step-children that we incite them to throw off the yoke of their parental connexion with us.

Perhaps it may be objected to these incidental remarks that they are not relevant to a view of

the domestic history of the time. But when it is borne in mind how much all men looked with interest to the condition of the Spanish colonies, and saw in them new sources of opulence, they will not be so considered ; especially when it is recollected that it is in unison with the spirit of the age to make the subjects in the colonies partake of all the advantages which are the portion of their fellow subjects in the mother country.

The exposition of the state of the finances this year was satisfactory to all parties. The different propositions to repeal particular taxes must be regarded as the efforts of individuals to keep themselves well in the eyes of the public, for their own sakes, rather than from any hope that the objects of their motions would be agreed to. It was however questionable policy to remit the tax on law proceedings. Many did think that the doors for litigation were still wide enough, and that to render them more so at the expense of the public could not promote domestic tranquillity. There were indeed many other taxes that could have been better spared than those which tended to make it expedient for litigants to refer their disputes to the arbi-

trations of common sense rather than to the provisions of statutes.

Besides the liberality displayed by Ministers in the finance discussions, it was gratifying to observe that there did exist a disposition to adapt the commercial policy of the state to the wants and wishes of the community. The time had arrived when the principles developed and explained by Adam Smith were allowed to be felt in the cabinet of the monarch; and the measures adopted in consequence, showed that men in office were not, as they often are, behind the intelligence of the age. The public, however, evinced a disposition to outrun their liberality; but not so greatly as to awaken any alarm whatever; on the contrary, it was only so much as to make many suppose that it arose from the excitement of a healthy condition, at least while the session of parliament lasted, as that condition was not imagined to be a morbid one, or that it would amount in the end, as it did, to the spasmodic excitement of fever and delirium.

The purification of the law, and other projects to improve the constitution, were also symptoms of the liberality of the time. The Catholic As-

sociation in Ireland was in accordance with the same spirit, and the Irish by it began to show that they were conscious of their own rights; though some thought that the institution was only calculated to exasperate their afflictions, by inducing them to think that men unfitted by education for political power were yet qualified to exercise it.

In this period of prosperity the incidents, not altogether of a political nature, which happened during the year, were yet influential. The first steps were taken for a national fostering of the arts, by the formation of a public gallery of pictures. Hitherto the British people had not evinced such a predilection for the fine arts as it might have been supposed a people so devoted to manufactures would have cherished. It was also ascertained that additional church accommodation was required; not however so much on account of any increased religious bias, as for the increased population. Towards the end of the year, although every incident in it of a domestic kind had been of a favorable character, far-sighted persons began to doubt if the many joint stock companies with which the speculative portion of the public was

engaged, were formed with all that consideration of contingencies which prudence required ; and some regarded many of them rather as mediums for stock-jobbing than as prospectively intended to be realised. Nevertheless the year 1824 was one of great apparent prosperity, and it closed with hopes which every well-wisher of his country prayed might not be blighted.

CHAPTER X.—ANNO 1825.

WE altogether dissent from the opinion that a country may always secure prosperity and happiness from the policy of men in power ; on the contrary, we think that the most influential persons have really almost as little to do with the production of such effects, as they have with the dearth or plenty bestowed by the seasons. We consider Ministers as mere agents in the hands of Providence, and that when good is intended to be given, fit instruments are employed to dispense it. For this reason we think that when able Ministers appear, it is not to them that the benefit of their acts should be ascribed, but that thanks are due to a higher quarter for having given them. None can more respect the talents of Canning than we do ; and circumstances required, before good could be obtained, that such a man should be in autho-

rity. But we cannot consider him as the author of those relaxations in a policy become obsolete, from which the people derived advantage. The spirits of the public, and the condition of the world, demanded the change, and he was endowed with perspicacity to discover what was wanted, and prudence to accord it.

The opening of parliament afforded a gratifying disclosure of the circumstances of the country; and it was formally announced that an important addition had been made to the political world, by the recognition of the new states into which the Spanish colonies had developed themselves. It was evident from this transaction, though we do not think it was observed at the time, that the design of Providence was, to multiply the divisions of power, and that such a multiplication would have the effect of extending the liberties of mankind. It is agreeable to the laws of nature that what takes place in one department pervades all. Governments cannot be increased without distributing power to new hands; for all the laws that regulate the world, both physical and moral, are universal. The same law of attraction, which makes the particle of sand rest on

the ground, holds the planets in their orbits. We therefore view the recognition of the new states in America, as one of those submissions to the manifestations of Providence which are esteemed as proofs of wisdom in statesmen. Had we longer withheld the recognition, who can say what evils might not have come to pass ?

Respecting the nature of the Irish Catholic Association, which had been instituted in the preceding year, public men began to entertain different opinions ; a proof that its character was not satisfactory. As we are adverse in all things to the employment of coercion, and as the Catholic Association was an indirect mode of using force to obtain what was deemed a necessary good, we do not hesitate to condemn it, as an artful stratagem of faction. It should have been shown first, that what was its object to obtain was in itself good : but this was not done. On the contrary, many persons, ourselves among the number, regard Popery as an evil, and every attempt to place it on an equality, not merely with Protestantism, but with reason, as an error that requires to be jealously resisted. If the Catholics be allowed all the privileges of Protestants, they will, in fact, by

the nature of their discipline, become in the enjoyment of more. Auricular confession, for example, is a sort of participation in crime, after the fact; and persons possessed of the knowledge of confessed iniquities acquire thereby a domination over their followers, which is plainly inconsistent with the natural organisation of society. The Catholics should sacrifice the comfort of making a clean breast of it—perhaps even more—to be allowed to enjoy the privileges of the Protestants.

We have already intimated, that as the Protestants in Ireland constitute but a small minority of the inhabitants, they cannot, in common sense, be regarded as the cause of the disturbances of that ill-fated country, however much the statutes may lean in their favour; for the offences of which the laws take cognizance must have been committed before the statutes can be applied. Remove the cause, and the effects must cease: but this is a truth which seems to be forgotten by the rival factions of Ireland. We have no apology to make for the inequality of the statutes; but we have the strongest condemnation to pronounce against that spirit which provokes those unjust statutes

into action. Let the Catholics cease to give the offence against which the Protestants are protected, and the laws will be soon altered.

The Protestants, if they are sincere ones, will be the first to call for their abrogation.

It is amazing that not one of all the speakers who took part in the discussions of four days on this subject, seemed to regard it as it should have been regarded,—on the principle of allowing one class of subjects greater privileges in common life than another; though the very cause of the debate was an allegation that the Protestants had something to surrender which the Catholics demanded, and to which they are entitled. But what right have the Catholics to greater privileges than their fellow subjects? The object of the Catholic Association was to procure Catholic Emancipation, without granting an equivalent for that which they represented themselves as entitled to require: it was, therefore, resisted by every fair-minded man.

The finance arrangements of this year were satisfactory. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Robinson, had, indeed, won and enjoyed the confidence of every influential man; insomuch that his statements were much relied on, and

were always explained with that degree of frankness and sincerity which suit the genius of the British people.

The discussions, also, which took place relative to what may be called the overstrained nationality of the navigation laws, were in accordance with the spirit of the times. It did, indeed, become the first commercial nation in the world, to take the lead in the promulgation of a new system of national commercial institutes, that were intended to enlarge the straitened and narrow maxims beginning to be felt as grievous. But although we say this generally, with heartfelt approbation of what was done and prepared, let it not, therefore, be imagined that we approve of *all* that was done. Trade is a practical matter, and in what respects its theory should be held in subordination to practice; because the mind of no man can grasp any thing so entirely as that he can apply it to what may ultimately happen. We approve of the spirit of the Ministry, but we doubt if some of their endeavours exactly suited the exigencies they were intended to meet.

It is sufficiently apparent that we regard every theoretical restriction on mankind as a

sort of shackle which cannot be too soon removed—but by the effects of persuasion, not by the exertion of force. We, therefore, have no hesitation in stating broadly, that, however we approved of the abrogation of the combination laws, we as decidedly condemn the half-judgment of those who made no provision for the effect of the abrogation. It was not to be endured, certainly, in this stage of public opinion, that the operative should remain little better than the slave of his employer; but it was as little to be thought of, that the master should be converted into the thrall of the man. Fairness required, and still does require, the establishment of a tribunal to which both parties should appeal. The operatives should, when they conceive that they are entitled to have any increase of privilege or immunity from their masters, state the grounds of their expectation, in writing, to such a tribunal. The tribunal should then call upon the masters to answer it; and should finally pronounce, upon the showing of both parties, whether the thing solicited ought or ought not to be granted. But as matters now stand, we are every now and then alarmed and thrown into consternation, by

“*strikes*” of operatives, with effects that disgrace the intelligence of the age.

The fears of the prudential, to which we alluded in the preceding year, respecting the number and magnitude of the joint stock speculations, were this year deplorably realized. The panic in the commercial world was, in fact, the effect of the conviction of the public that those fears were well founded; and it may be considered as the explosion of a noxious vapour which had been long gradually accumulating. A species of epidemic had infected a class of persons, whose habits and vocations were alien to speculation; and when they found that their *El dorado* dreams were unsubstantial, disappointment made them wild, and the *panic* was the consequence. But, except among the dupes of the Stock Exchange sleights and ingenuity, the country continued progressive, and trade and commerce, ruffled, no doubt, by the squall, continued to flourish, and the great fountains of the national prosperity to flow undiminished.

CHAPTER XI.—ANNO 1826.

THE beauty of a thing increases as we recede from it. We only recollect past pleasures, not past grievances ; and who thinks of the blemishes of the distant fixed stars ? This gracious provision of nature mitigates the faults of contemporaries in each other's eyes after death ; inso-much that the rancorous enemy has been known to shed tears at the sight of the moss-grown epitaph of one who died the object of his hate.

With something of this retrospective feeling, we call to mind the incidents of the year 1826 ; a period which, as it passed, was singularly monotonous, and during which Divine Providence, in its mysterious ways, seems to have shed upon the earth, and on mankind, more than the usual abundance of weaknesses and follies. For more than an age there had not been a time so little fitted for the purposes of the historian, nor one in which the general mass of the people had en-

joyed so much comfort. Yet it was not barren of distress.

When Parliament met, it was opened by commission, and it appeared by the communication made in the name of the King, that the pecuniary embarrassments which had arisen from the *panic*, were of such a nature that the Ministers saw no difficulty in anticipating their abatement. The fact is, that the distress which affected the commercial community was so evidently a natural consequence of the intoxicating spirit of speculation which had bewildered men's minds during the two preceding years, that the Ministry did not choose to say how much they regarded it as a salutary chastisement. It is impossible to read the speeches in Parliament respecting it, without being impressed with the belief that it was so considered.

But although we have no doubt the Government did view the pecuniary infliction on the speculative portion of the community as in some degree well deserved, it would be unjust to say that it did not do its best to appease the commercial distress which was partly owing to the same cause. Nor can it be disguised that there was the usual effusion of nonsense about paper and bullion, which renders the discussion

of any monetary question in Parliament so amusingly ridiculous. It was extraordinary, that while at this time some men seemed to have clear perceptions of the representative nature of money, not one proposed that the issuers of *Paper* money should be obliged to hold stock in the funds equal to the amount of their issues; which stock, in case of their failure, might be applied to the payment of their notes in circulation. The whole question of Gold *versus* Paper seems to resolve itself into this; for a bit of paper would be as good as a piece of gold, if it really did represent a thing of real value. Some trash was also discharged, about the difficulty of making paper-money so that it could not be imitated;—as if the arts did not supply means by which a bank-note may be rendered so difficult of imitation as almost to ensure the extinction of the crime of forgery! But upon the whole bearing of this perplexing question of banking, we hold the parliamentary theories to be eminently obscure and absurd.

At this time a demand was made for money to be applied to the repairs of the palace at Pimlico; and those orators who address themselves to the sordid misconceptions of the people, condemned the outlay. We know nothing

more unworthy of a right spirit than this. The true question was not as to the amount required, but as to the way in which it was to be expended. While we have a king, we must endure to pay for the "pomp and circumstance" of his condition; and it never ought to be a question as to the expenditure, but as to the objects of it. In a commercial country like this, our trade in arts and manufactures requires the royal establishment to be independent of all political considerations; and it should be the duty of Parliament to watch that due grants are made for the support of its magnificence, quite as much as to see that they are judiciously applied, and to take care they are not excessive.

We cannot repress our derisive compassion at the parliamentary inefficiency of this year; for though retaining the liveliest remembrance of the general prosperity, we can discern nothing in the public proceedings but something resembling those serious conversations about hard times, which occasionally arise at good dinners. Except, indeed, the necessary routine business of the state, there was nothing on which any mind that had the slightest perception of the way in which the world rolls onward, would

have bestowed more than a cursory glance. Yet there were motions about the annual estimates, which at all times merit the gravest consideration, as if they were rare and extraordinary. One of these abortive motions was made by Hobhouse ; who has somehow acquired a certain degree of eminence without possessing the least claim to applause, and without enjoying the confidence of the people. He proposed to reduce the estimates, to no other end that any one can discern, but that of demonstrating his own total and entire incapability to suggest any thing for the good of the commonwealth. No doubt the reduction of the estimates is in one respect doing good ; but when a man shows that he is possessed only of that questionable talent which every one may exercise—the talent to discover faults in human things—it is as offensive to hear him making speeches, as it were to see him committing a moral crime. Hobhouse should recollect, and shrink into modesty at the remembrance, that nature gave him only half a mind ; and that in this age we want more than a demi-statesman.

But let us turn to consider a speech by Huskisson, relative to the navigation laws, in which he displayed much both of that good and bad

sense by which he acquired distinction : as if all he said or suggested relating to commerce was only enlightened ! We differ so much from some of the dogmas which he occasionally maintained, that in a sketch of this kind we should do wrong to say more than that, in this session of the Legislature he proposed a relaxation in the provisions of the navigation laws, that was decidedly wise. We only think that, with respect to our colonies in North America, there did not appear to be that comprehension of view which might have been inferred from much which he explained.

It was, however, a pleasant circumstance in the character of the times, to see so much liberality countenanced by government, and to remark that improvement in the spirit of our laws generally was no longer partial, but obvious alike in the statutes, and in the method of applying them to the uses of the subject.

The reversal of the Scottish attainders of the adherents of the house of Stuart, was also one of those pleasing characteristics of the age which the heart and understanding complacently contemplate. It is the character of a time of war to make the ties of society gird too stringently ;—the business of peace is to amend that error.

CHAPTER XII.—ANNO 1827.

THE year 1827 was remarkable, not for the importance of the events which happened in the course of it,—though they were impressive,—but from the spirit which began to be manifested, on all sides, with regard to Catholic Emancipation. It was evident that the time could not be far off, when the claims of the Catholics would be conceded; but there was a looseness and generality in the notions entertained by the public concerning the question generally, which made it evident that, come when it would, the English Constitution, the glory of so many ages, would inevitably suffer a terrible shock. The advocates for concession were not deficient in force and standing; and their opponents were feeble, when their opposition was estimated by the value of the thing in jeopardy. But the most ominous symptom of all, was at the time entirely overlooked. The

Catholics studiously kept out of sight, that to grant them the privileges of the other subjects of the Crown would in fact be granting them more;—for they offered no concession on their part, but desired to retain all that they possessed in addition to what they might regain. The corporations and other interested bodies had not sagacity enough to discern this; and the consequence was, that the opponents of the Catholics' real right were as distinguished generally for obtuseness of intellect, and obesity of principle, if the expression may be used, as their adversaries were for audacity.

One little incident occurred early in the Session of Parliament, which deserves particular notice; because the same prejudice which existed then respecting it, is still in vigorous rankness, and every one who has the rights of his fellow creatures at heart, cannot be too often reminded of its vulgar stupidity. We allude to a petition against the exportation of machinery, presented by that Solon of the tap-room, Hume. Is it credible that any man who can put four letters of the alphabet into one vocal sound, could be guilty of doing, at this time of day, an act that would have excited controversy even in

the dark ages? To suppose that there is any difference in reality, between the trade in machinery, and the trade in printed calicoes for example, is to suppose that a nail, because it has a head, is as intelligent as a man who has a head also. The manufactory of machines, if it pay as well, is just as good as any other branch of trade. All that can be expected from making it not so free as any other, is to occasion delay in establishing the manufacture of which it is the object, some time longer in a foreign country. The only sure and true rivalry in manufactures is, to make better and cheaper articles. The idea of stopping them in other nations by such prohibitions, argues an incapacity of comprehending a principle which cannot be too soon or too much despised.

In the course of the session, an opportunity was presented to Parliament, on which it might have very unequivocally declared the light in which it would regard any attempt to interfere with the domestic concerns of other countries. This was an application from Portugal, for assistance to resist Spain. Canning did, indeed, say that it was not to resist Spain only, but any as-

sailant, whomsoever he might be; and Parliament undoubtedly considered that we were bound by treaties to grant that assistance; but it ought also to have stipulated, with judicious jealousy, that our assistance should not be employed in the internal affairs of that kingdom. It can never be regarded as less than a high crime, for any British Ministry to interfere in the civil dissensions of any nation; and in order to appreciate it, we have only to think how we ourselves would resent any attempt of a foreign power, to meddle with those concerns which we regard as strictly our own. What a shout of indignation would shake the pillars of the earth, if any alien state dared to interfere with us in the discussions respecting Ireland! Nothing, however, could be more according to that magnanimity which belongs to the British people, than the motion proposed by Canning. Yet it was opposed—by whom? Hume!—It is astonishing how some men are prone, by the meanness of their conceptions of public duty, to secure for themselves a high place on the pillory of posterity. The motion of Canning was carried, as all the determinations of a great

people should be, and the blustering motions of Hume were abominated as they merited.

Soon after the nation had nobly determined to take Portugal under her wing, the death of the Duke of York occurred. This was an incident that could not be felt as other than impressive ;—for had the army not been raised by his administration of its affairs into its actual condition, the country could not have stepped forward with the dignity which it assumed on that occasion. Of the Duke of York's character as a statesman, little can be said ; for he seems studiously to have kept aloof from the troubles of state affairs. But as the civil administrator of our military affairs, few will now hesitate to give him very great praise. As a commanding officer, his talents have been brought in question, by that want of success which attended him. But such is the penalty which all men must pay who enjoy public trusts, and do not conduct them successfully. The world forgets to bear in mind, that the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, and naturally looks upon success as the criterion of ability. Of the Duke's conduct as a prince and a gentleman we can speak more decidedly. We had

the honour of his acquaintance, and do not hesitate to say that, with a degree of diffidence rare in a person of high rank, he possessed much more than a common share of that kind-heartedness which is the peculiar gift of his family.

It would be unpardonable not to notice the Duke's predilection for gambling; but while honour presides, we do not see that weakness in any other light than *as* a weakness, arising from the want of subjects to be in earnest about, in that class of persons who are supposed to be addicted to the supposed vice. We know not the moral difference between a man who plays with cards, and with the fluctuations in the funds: nor do we think that he is a bit the worse who loses his ancestors' gatherings at Crockford's, than the merchant who deals in rum puncheons and cotton bags, or any other commodity which fluctuates in price. It is the idleness of the thing which is objectionable; and men who have a craving for employment, and cannot find it, are more to be pitied than considered with a harsher feeling. And, after all, how much of what the best of us do is but thriftless!

In the course of the spring of this year, the Earl of Liverpool, who had been long at the head of the King's Council, was, on account of his health, necessarily and suddenly set aside from office. The epithet of "respectable" is perhaps the only one that can be applied to his talents ; and while we acknowledge his integrity and his disposition to do well, we cannot find a fitter word to express what we think of him. He has the merit of doing in all things what he believed to be for the advantage of the public, and of acting more in conformity with what appeared to be the public sentiment, than any of his predecessors during a long previous period. We do not say that he did this more than any of those alluded to ; but it certainly was so considered by many.

The deposition of this noblemen from power, caused one of those state arrangements which make the shrewd sometimes suspect that changes in the British Cabinet are the result of accommodations between the *ins* and the *outs*. It was evident from the whole tenor of opinion at the time, that the advocates for Catholic Emancipation were coming into ascendancy ; and accordingly, no sooner was it known that a

new administration must be formed, than six members of the Cabinet resigned. This, in the familiar language of the day, was called *a strike*;—and it certainly was not regarded with so much solemnity as it ought to have been. We are however persuaded that the ministers who resigned were actuated by the most conscientious motives, and that they foresaw the time was at hand when the claims and pretensions of the Catholics must be conceded. It was not so thought at the time; but we have ever been of that opinion; because the men who did resign were acknowledged by their rivals to be firm in principle, and characteristically known for their adherence to the maxims of Protestant ascendancy, which had long distinguished the British Government.

Scarcely was Canning, the successor of Liverpool, installed in office, when he was seized with an inflammatory illness of dangerous symptoms; and though he did not survive long, he did not die before he had given expectation, that the British councils were to be guided by a spirit still more in unison with that of the age than had latterly been the case.

Canning was undoubtedly a man of some

genius and ability. Perhaps in using the term genius, we apply to him a higher epithet than many will admit he deserved; but none whatever will refuse to acknowledge his decided general ability; for though he may not in any one line be entitled to the admiration of posterity, he was generally so superior to others, that he merits the enviable title of a great man. We place him in the very first class of those to whom the destinies of Great Britain have been confided; and therefore, although we say, (and we speak with reference to particular instances) that we have seen more than one of our public men whom we would designate as his superiors, we never yet in any one instance met with one who, take him for all in all, had so many qualities to ensure at once respect and confidence.

The political death of Liverpool, and the extinction of such a mind as that of Canning, constitute an epoch from which may be dated a new series of the influential events of the British Government. But there was one small unobserved incident, which took place at the same time, from which we are disposed to augur still greater future manifestations. It was the result

of a Committee of the House of Commons, held at the instance of Mr. Wilmot Horton, respecting the causes of emigration, and the means of relieving the country of its superabundant population ; the latter being a fact which was as clearly demonstrated as it could be, by a Parliamentary inquiry. Nothing to any great extent has, it is true, yet been done in the business ; but it has laid the foundation of a future colonial system which must one day be adopted, and to which mankind will look as to the promulgation of a new code of ethics, that in operation will refine and exalt the moral worth of the human race. So strongly is this our conviction, that if we are called on to say what year was the most illustrious in the reign and regency of George IV. after that in which Napoleon was sent to a rock in the mid ocean, we should at once say, beyond all question, the year 1827. Others produced more conspicuous events, but none in which wisdom and liberality had more obvious influence on the minds and measures of British Statesmen.

CHAPTER XIII.—ANNO 1828.

THE year 1828 was not so remarkable as the preceding; but still the prosperity of the kingdom was progressing; every thing partook of the same vigour, but the decisive indications of activity were less conspicuous. The spring, however, was only waning into summer; the blossoms were not so abundant, but on all sides, the promise of a generous autumn inspired cheerfulness and hope.

Parliament met for the despatch of business on the 29th of January, but no measure of particular prominence attracted its attention, if we except one proposed for consideration by the Marquis of Lansdowne. The licentiousness consequent on the disbanding of a great army, and its concomitants, naturally began to show itself among the people. Robberies were committed with a degree of boldness which demonstrated

the force which had been embodied for the purposes of the war ; and their audacity gave rise to a new species of crime, new at least in degree and in prevalence, namely, compromises between robbers and the robbed, with a view to give up, for a consideration, the property which had been stolen. It was evident, that the bare admission of the fact of such a practice as being notorious, would ensure the adoption of some remedial measure ; and such was the case.

Lord Goderich, who on the death of Mr. Canning was appointed his successor, was by all men admitted to be, for his honourable feelings and the general liberality of his views, not unfit for the office of prime minister ; but he had not been long installed in it, ere he felt himself unequal to the task ; and his friends saw him exposed to a severity of ordeal, which, they feared, from his natural mildness of disposition, he would not encounter with so much hardihood as the great trust required. In fact, from sheer want of confidence in himself, to brave the obstacles with which he was environed, he retired from office, but with undiminished reputation, or rather with an augmentation of esteem, for having so justly estimated his own capabilities.

Lord Goderich was succeeded by the Duke of Wellington; and if we were to regard the opinions of many as to his fitness, merely because he had been a great commander (as if that were a defect), we should hesitate to state what we think of that appointment. But holding, as we decidedly do, that a man great in any one department of human capacity, will be, to a certain extent, superior in all, we differ from what was the notion of many sagacious party men at the time—namely, that the Duke ought not to have been minister. We even differ from the duke himself, and regard his declaration as but another instance of the inability of a man to judge rightly of himself. “Knowing,” said his grace, “my incapacity for filling the post of first minister, I should have been mad, and worse than mad, had I ever entertained the insane project which certain individuals, for their own base purposes, have imputed to me.” We think, with all deference to his grace, that the qualities of character requisite in a minister, are not so much those of knowledge or experience, as it is called, as of a certain speciality of innate endowment; and we carry this idea so far (it may be incorrectly), that we think a mere

drill serjeant, if he be a good one, a better block out of which to hue a prime minister, than the finest piece of Parian aristocracy, if the latter be not consistent in substance throughout, and uniformly better than the whole stratum of the material from which such officers are commonly taken.

To the duke's colleagues we have no particular objection. The ruling mind was his ; and it was a brilliant proof of his superiority to most men, that he selected coadjutors whom he knew would not dare to dispute the will of their superior. Perhaps to Mr. Huskisson, upon a scrupulous scrutiny of ourselves, we might have objected ; but that individual was in fashion at the time, and the duke, who looked only for men of detail, probably went with the current ; and the rather, as the subjects on which Mr. Huskisson was said to be so superior, were somewhat out of the course of those matters to which a prime minister regards it as his chief duty to attend. Our objection to Mr. Huskisson would have been on the score of his being a philosophical Radical, if there be such a thing ; whereas the duke was a man who would feel and act only as the minister of Great Britain.

In fact, the millenium is not yet come; and till it does come, we wish to see the ministers of nations seeking to promote the good of mankind only by making the advancement of their own respective countries the means. As a mere theorem, no one can more respect Radicalism than we do: Heaven forgive us if we err in saying so! But until we observe every leaf upon a tree to be exactly alike, and only one species of tree to be found on the whole face of the whole earth, we cannot think that tongues and people were made so different as they are without a purpose. We are of opinion, that Huskisson forgot he was only an official of the British nation, and imagined himself that unappropriated chattel, a citizen of the world.

The Duke of Wellington had not long been seated in the Treasury, nor had got his legs dangling comfortably over the elbow of his chair,* when it appeared evident that public affairs were to be conducted according to *his* particular notions of expediency. He took an early opportunity of contradicting flatly, that he had given Huskisson reason to believe that he would conduct the policy of the country accord-

* A habit of His Grace.

ing to the gospel promulgated by Mr. Canning ; and History will peer with curious eyes, small and twinkling, into that page where she is called upon to read the conversation of the 18th of February, which took place in the House of Commons *anent* Huskisson's understanding of what was the scope of Canning's policy.*

Feathers in the air show how the wind is blowing, be it ever so light ; and accordingly, a motion of Lord John Russell's demonstrated how the current tended that was carrying the vessel of the state towards a lee shore. It was, in fact, evident, from the signs of the times, that Catholic Emancipation was to be conceded, though it was not to have been expected then, that it would have been granted without an equivalent.

No augur could have predicted the overthrow

* By-the-by, the future antiquary may trace to that conversation, the subsequent adoption into English vernacular of the well-known phrase, " no mistake ;" a phrase that will ever be in active use, when his grace is only remembered along with the other stars of the earth, whose distance shall be forgotten in the purity of their radiance.

of an ancient state more surely, by inspecting the entrails of an innocent lamb, than all wise men predicted the capsizing of the British Constitution for a time, by his lordship's motion on the 26th of March—"That the House do resolve to take into consideration so much of the Act of Charles II. as requires persons to receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, according to the rites of the Church of England, before they enter upon any civil affairs."

The discussion concerning this motion, we have no scruple in saying, was conducted with great art and skill, both by Lord John Russell's party, and by his adversaries; the latter of whom evidently felt themselves to be powerless, under the mystical predominance of a force to which they thought it their duty to submit.

The motion could only be regarded as a feeler, thrown out to ascertain how the public pulse was beating; and such things in themselves, though undeserving of much consideration, are of inestimable value, in a state that professes to be quite as much regulated by public opinion as by right principles. Perhaps we should be justified in saying, that the state

of England is sometimes more actuated by popular opinion than by right principles.

The British nation, however, always thinks generously, and often acts greatly ; and in those two peculiarities there is a compensating power, which corrects any error that may arise from considering what is popular, rather than what is right.

It may be thought that we would particularly notice the surrender of that strong outwork of the practical Constitution, by the bill for the Abolition of the Test and Corporation Acts. But we consider that measure to have been the necessary consequence of a predetermination within the Cabinet, to allow the subjects of the Pope in these kingdoms to possess that ascendancy which the Protestants had so long enjoyed as to have lost the power of appreciating its worth. But in making this observation, let us be clearly understood : we do not admit that popularity, rather than right, should be the criterion of national policy ; we think that while popularity is regarded with the deference which it at present commands, the Cabinet, perhaps, cannot do otherwise than

consult popular opinion. How much more, therefore, does it become the duty of every man to disseminate right principles, in order that the public may ultimately be brought to see, that no permanent benefit can ever be obtained but by correct thinking, in the members individually who collectively form the community !

Upon the subject of the estimates, we have little to say : they were of course proposed to be lessened, by that class of public men who think blustering in Parliament is serving their country. It is surprising, these penny-wise patriots do not perceive, that official actions, if they are at all worthy of attention, must be always much more so than the opinions of any individual. It is clear that estimates, derived from official returns, cannot, if fairly made up, be a subject of controversy ; but that before they come to be proposed, grounds should be shown, from the aspect of circumstances, whether they ought or ought not to be obtained. It is a curious fact, and it shows of what sort of mere bombast vulgar patriotism is commonly made, that it will not be easy to recollect when the orators of the pots and tankards proposed,

or even agreed to, in any crisis, an increase of our military or naval establishments. Surely the times have not been few, since the Revolution of 1688, when augmentation was as much required as reduction at other times.

We should fail in an essential part of our attempt to give a critical view of the transactions of this time, if we did not notice a circumstance which, though it made a great noise, we cannot now discern how it was really deemed of importance. We allude to the Brunswick clubs in Ireland. These were established with the creditable folly of maintaining the Protestant ascendancy, when it was obvious, by the signs of the times, that it was impossible any longer to preserve it. It is perfectly amazing, that by such cutaneous pimples in politics, it should have been imagined by any sane person that the vitals of the state were endangered. Nevertheless it was so thought, and many not very wise, but ardent spirits, kindled into activity about these clubs, hastened on by their efforts the very measures intended to be averted. Thus, however, is zeal made by its indiscretions to minister to the development of

natural moral processes. No man could disguise from himself that the star of the Catholics was in the ascendant ; and many thought that the most judicious mode, according to the spirit of the age, of counteracting its influence, was to meet it with liberality. But it is enough to observe, that the ineffectual fires of the unchristian Protestants, who countenanced the formation of the clubs, not only failed in their object, but were almost quenched by public indignation ; entirely so they cannot be, while zealots are not considered and treated as criminals. But notwithstanding that many unsatisfactory things were indicated by the aspect of the times, it is impossible to deny that this year was one of the most flourishing that Great Britain had ever seen. There was no doubt occasional glooms, like those shadows of scirrhus clouds, which, in the most genial days, “ overcome” the landscape ; but all the growths of the year were progressing, and it is impossible to look back at the characteristics of the time, without being struck with awe at the steady development of the blessings of the peace which the kingdom enjoyed, and the little heed that

was paid to them by all sorts of men. The tide was flowing, the moon waning, and the energy of increase was acting upon all things ; but the public was disturbed by petty brawls in the streets, and remarked not the sober equanimity with which nature was proceeding to her great and good results.

CHAPTER XIV.—ANNO 1829.

WE approach the British events of the year 1829 with a feeling of solemnity ; for the first incident to be noticed is, the subscription which was raised for the Spanish and Portuguese refugees. No other state, ancient or modern, from the beginning of time to the day and hour in which this sentence is penned, has manifested such sublime benevolence as our fatherland. Other countries have rivalled, perhaps surpassed it in the achievement of arts and of arms ; but in the divine munificence of philanthropy it beggars all the records of ancient and of modern times. When political triumphs become forgotten, the attainments of science obsolete, and the glory of genius extinguished, this unparalleled imitation of impartial Providence, which dispenses its sunshine alike to the worthy and the unworthy, will almost seem to

indicate for what that Providence summoned Great Britain from the sea.

To advert to the particular instances in which this gracious spirit was manifested, is unnecessary; it is enough at this time to notice that it again appeared, with all its original brightness, as an omen of assurance to the world, that the energies of the beneficent nation were undecayed.

The year had unfolded but little of its spring, when it began to be hinted that the Government intended to introduce into parliament a bill for the emancipation of the Catholics. The intelligence did not take the public by surprise; but reflecting men wondered what the equivalent would be to the Protestants, for allowing so many of their fellow subjects to exercise the privileges of freemen while they remained the slaves of the Roman Pontiff, and to exercise the rights of common sense while they denied themselves the exercise of their own material senses.

Soon after this intended revolution began to be known, many Protestants bestirred themselves,—we do not say wisely, but zealously,—for the true nature of the measure was not published. They, however, assumed that the eman-

cipation was to be granted without a condition, and they were alarmed accordingly. But the King's speech, at the opening of parliament, set all speculation at rest. It was evident by it that Catholic Emancipation was to be proposed, and that no conditions were to be stipulated.

The serious of the kingdom were dismayed to observe that a measure, so vital to the constitution as established in 1688, was to be brought forward by men who had hitherto been considered as the defenders of Protestant ascendancy; and doubts were in consequence thrown on the reality of the patriotism they had professed. Without question, the age required some alleviation of the Catholic disabilities; but few who judged of the tendencies of general human nature could see, without sorrow and alarm, so sweeping a measure as that now contemplated. We have only to remark that in this instance there was a deplorable departure from that maxim which the British Government had long professed—namely, of ruling more by principles than by popularity.

Catholic Emancipation was undoubtedly agreeable to the wishes of a majority of the people; but those who recollect that the minority is

the wisest in all communities, foreboded of strange advents.

Towards the end of March every other topic merged in the one above alluded to. But in condemning the measure as strongly as we can condemn any measure not decidedly bad, because it did not propose any equivalent safeguards to the Protestants,—there was one instance of superlative magnanimity which can never be sufficiently admired, though the wisdom of it may be disputed. In the speech of the Duke of Wellington, on the 2d of April, his Grace said, that if the measure was not found to answer in effect the object for which it was undertaken,—namely, the pacification of Ireland,—he would propose the abrogation of the very law which he then advocated.

It was at once admitted that the proposed measure was only a measure of expediency, and that it evinced that boldness which belonged to the duke's character. But all men who knew how apt human nature is to change under altered circumstances, naturally asked themselves whether what the duke so manfully said he would do, could in reality be done.

The measure passed into a law, and the British Constitution, under which so many

boons had been dispensed to the world, ceased to exist, not only in its integrity, but in its practical effect. But while we say this with unfeigned sorrow, let us not be misunderstood. We do think some measure of amelioration was indispensable, but we are of opinion that the pledges required from the Catholics were not such as honest men of their faith could be expected to observe.

On the 28th of April, the Duke of Norfolk, the premier peer of England, and in courtesy the head of all the Catholics in the empire, took his seat in the House of Lords.

The act for the emancipation of the Catholics was the great measure of the year,—perhaps, as far as this realm was concerned, of the age. Every other device of statesmen was not even secondary to this; the proceedings of the Government were performed with the equanimity of mere routine, and the legislators of England retired quietly to their castles and their manors, after having given a blow to the practical wisdom of their ancestors, which their children may have to rue with tears of blood. But emancipation was the fashion and the mania of the time.

In accordance with the spirit in which they granted relief to the Catholics, the Legislature evinced their liberality by a measure which they probably deemed as important—namely, the legalising the sale of hares and partridges ! It is humiliating to human wisdom that such things should occupy the attention of persons who meddle with the concerns of empires and the interests of the world.

After parliament was prorogued, an incident occurred in Ireland, which ought to have shown the abettors of Catholic Emancipation, as now unlimitedly granted, that it was only the signal and the omen of troubles. The Orange faction indiscreetly made an attempt to demonstrate that they still possessed the superiority which had in fact been abrogated. It never occurred to these zealots that they were now reduced to the subordination which ever waits upon minority, and that the division of the people from which, by law, they derived their supremacy, no longer existed. In consequence they wickedly attempted to exhibit that old audacity towards their fellow subjects, which was equally repugnant to true Christianity, and absurd in itself,

from the inferiority to which they were consigned by the Emancipation.

It is said that the Catholic peasantry, dreading the insults of the Orange yeomanry, united in common defence and for common vengeance. We do not ask if this was true; but it must be evident that the Catholics made preparations for insults which they only apprehended. Was there no gentleman in Ireland to tell them that these preparations ought not to be made, because they could not but minister to the evil apprehended? Was there no one to advise the Orangemen to forbear their imbecile proceedings—for imbecile they had become? It is not in the nature of this sketch that we should describe the particulars of the affairs of Machier and Fermanagh; but they deserve to be recorded, as instances of the senselessness of the Irish gentry, and the easily excited passions of the Irish people.

Another measure of this time merits particular attention; the introduction into London of Sir Robert Peel's New Police, as it was called. Upon that radical change in the domestic condition of England, we refrain from offering any opinion. Ostensibly it seemed to hamper the

ancient liberties of the subject ; but by those who consider security as the liberty of society, particularly of enlightened society, the introduction of that police will be regarded as a great boon to the country. We do not desire to speak finally on this point ; because the measure has not yet been sufficiently tested by experience ; but we think the principle of the measure highly judicious, and are only doubtful of its working under difficult circumstances, from the intemperance attending upon novelty.

An event occurred at this time which, though of a questionable, was of a plausible nature. We allude to the resolution of a public meeting, declaratory “ that no efforts should be omitted to restore the comforts of the poor : ” as if, since the first institution of property—that is, since there was a stronger and a weaker man on the face of the earth—the poor had ever been so comfortable as they were at this time in England ! In fact, the whole character of the proceedings of that meeting were grounded on a false assumption. The poor have an undoubted right to have their condition as much as possible improved ; but it is false to assert that they have anything to demand or to recover.

The demagogues who have procured the abolition of the combination laws, have only half served the objects of their intended bounty. A tribunal is yet wanted to arbitrate between the masters and the operatives ;—for, disguise it as we may, the question is—how are labour and skill to be rightly valued? Until a tribunal is established to which workmen and their employers can equally resort, the abolition of the combination laws is only an approximation to what is needed ; and without some check is imposed, it can only be regarded as an evil.

Altogether, however, the moral progress of the nation was visible in every thing ; and if there be some measures and symptoms of intentions which must be speculatively condemned, it will be difficult to find a parallel in the history of the British nation to the enjoyments, the promises, and the prospects of this year.

CHAPTER XV.—ANNO 1830.

ON the 26th day of June, in this year, George the Fourth died.

It is necessary, before adverting more particularly to that event, to notice the features by which this year was distinguished.

Perhaps the most remarkable of those events was, an attempt in the House of Commons to obtain for the Jews the same privileges which had been granted to the Roman Catholics. This was a natural sequence of things. It was evident that all principles were relaxed in men's minds, and it is not surprising that mere temporal considerations were supposed to influence the Legislature.

The Catholics, by the Emancipation Bill, were made superior to Protestants; inasmuch as they were allowed to retain their allegiance to the Pope, and their right to possess, as it

may be called, the immunity of *particeps criminis*—of auricular confession : for the oaths required of them may be regarded as film and cobweb, which the breath of the Roman Pontiff can at any time blow into “*thin air*.” It is therefore not wonderful that, although the law of the land is based ostensibly on Christianity, the Jews should have imagined that they were entitled to enjoy all the rights of Protestant subjects, even while they considered the basis of the law as untrue and abominable. We say this as strongly and as plainly as words can express it,—in order that our notions may not be liable to be suspected of meaning two things. But we also say that the time was arrived when both the Catholics and the Jews might justly solicit a relaxation of the laws which were felt by them to be oppressive;—though the time was *not* come, and we trust never *will* come, when they might aspire to be superior in the British state. The utmost that could rightly and justly have been granted to the Catholics was, a modification of the restrictions which galled them ; and to that extent the Jews had an equally just claim to relief. Their petition, however, was rejected, but not on the ground on which it should

have been rejected. The petitioners should have stated their willingness to receive the boon which they solicited, under due restrictions.

But a far more impressive inference may be drawn from these proceedings than relates to the mere political aspect of them. The incident demonstrates that there existed in the public a carelessness of Christian doctrines, which is ominous to all morality; for the world is too old not to know and to feel that laxity in principle generates licentiousness in action. Mankind must be kept ashamed of many things which their own feelings naturally prompt them to suspect ought to be regarded as natural and essential rights.

It would not be proper to overlook a very thoughtless investigation which at this time Parliament instituted;—namely, to ascertain if it were possible to derive from any modification of commercial circumstances the means of rendering bread dearer to the consumers, and thereby of upholding the high war rents of the landlords. This was the drift of the proceeding with regard to the prevalent agricultural perplexities; and, as might have been foreseen, the Government did not dare to countenance a course of

inquiry that purposed ultimately to be of advantage to only one class in the nation. Connected with this investigation was some sort of scrutiny about the currency ; but as we regard both Parliament and Government as utterly erroneous in their views respecting the true nature of money, we should only repeat what we have already said on the subject, were we to indulge in any further remark on it. We shall therefore only pray most devoutly, that the cataracts on the eyes of both may soon be ripe for the cutting or extraction.

Another indication as to the wishes of the public mind, received at this time a more decided countenance from Government. The supporters of Catholic emancipation evidently began to suspect that, to appease the troubles of Ireland, something else was required than that measure ; nay, they began to doubt if it ought ever to have been placed in the foreground of beneficent intentions towards that naturally turbulent but sensitive people. We allude to the talk about a modified system of Poor Laws, to subdue those irritations which were the true cause of the insubordination of Ireland ;—irritations, not arising from political disabilities, but from phy-

sical privations. No precise system, however, was proposed; but it was grateful to humanity to see that the minds of statesmen were turning towards the source of the evils which they so much deplored. We say turning only; for we do not think that any system whatever of Poor Laws for Ireland can be more than an ineffectual palliative to a chronic disease. The vital evil of that anomalous country is in the system by which the landlords obtain their rents; and until that can be changed, the Irish must wail over their stinted meals, and see the rich abundance of their island depart from their ports to make cheap the markets of the "English epicure." We can conceive nothing more disgraceful to the reforming spirit of the age, than the so much squandering of time and talk on matters of form, as to how power and privilege should be distributed, while the heart-sickness of Ireland is left without relief. The Irish landlords should be made to deal *directly* with their tenantry; and a systematic suppression of the middle-men or tacks-men should be introduced: all else will prove but "leather and prunella." It is the babble of closet theorists to talk of "education," till wants are satisfied. "Toom

stalls," says the wary Scots, "make biting horse." Fill the mangers with fodder, and quiet will come of course.

The same disposition which we have before noticed with delight, to soften the spirit of the Criminal Laws, continued to operate in this last Parliament of George IV. It is singular that we have heard of no advocate for appeasing the vengeance of the law, who has ever observed the wisdom with which the ten commandments are given. They forbid certain actions; but, as we have before hinted, they leave it to the spirit of the age in which the actions are committed, to apportion the punishment to the character of the delinquency. It can no longer be doubted that the statute book was foul with bloody penalties, which the spirit of the age was both ashamed of and afraid to enforce. Till it can be shown that the nation is in a retrogressive state, we should hail as at once wise and beautiful every practicable mitigation of the law, and every possible increase of preventive police.

As we are approaching the termination of an important cycle, the regency and reign of George IV., in which it will be allowed that juster, and therefore more liberal, notions were

promulgated on many points of policy than in any other equal term of years since the institution of the British government, we must here advert to the fact, that at this period doubts began to be entertained, even by many liberal patriots, that in the measures of the reciprocal commercial system, the existing condition of other nations was overlooked. It is certain that to the scientific principle, as it may be called, of those measures, no possible objection can be made; but it is equally indisputable that the *expediency* of many of them may have been problematical. It is the fashion of the time to consider what is right in theory as necessarily right in practice; but Nature herself denies this proposition. Feelings, prejudices, and all those various ingredients of which nationality is compounded, require to be consulted, and *will* be considered. We therefore regard what passed in parliament, as to the "reciprocity" system, not as satisfactory to the mercantile community, but only as a proof that the relaxation of old customs had been to a certain extent beneficial. It did not follow that, carried out in all its scope, the reciprocity system would be so beneficial as it might be, if the world were not subdivided into nations and tongues.

On the 26th of June the King died. The general character of George the Fourth as a man, we in some degree considered at the beginning of this sketch of his regency and reign ; and it is not consistent with the objects of such a sketch to enter into lengthened details on this point. We must in fairness add, however, that in the personal exercise of his office, as the head of a limited monarchy, he merited great praise. In little that affected the usages of the people did he appear to interfere ; and if he did at one time allow his private feeling as a man to influence the maxims of the King, there were not wanting many who sympathised with the natural weakness. Nothing is in fact so difficult as the administration of power when the passions predominate ; and it would reflect no honour on the candour of the age too severely to condemn George the Fourth, for endeavouring to appease the feelings of an offended man, through the medium of his kingly office.—With this questionable exception, George the Fourth was undoubtedly a constitutional King ; and though his reign was occupied by vast and many-coloured events, it will not be easy to name an equal series of years in which the British nation was at once

more glorious and prosperous. His regency comprehended the most triumphant war in the annals of his country; and though fluctuations were felt in the prosperity attendant on peace, still the nation advanced in all those things for which mankind associate together. The arts, without perhaps evincing the existence of great genius, proceeded onward with a steady, we might even say in a distinguished course; and there was a general activity and elevation of mind in the people, which entitles the reign of George the Fourth to be remembered as among the most glorious, as well as the most beneficial, of any recorded in our national annals.

THE END.



